THE

REFORMED CHRISTIAN's

New-years-Gift:

Plainly and fully ſhewing

How he may be able by *SCRIPTURE PROOFS* only, to Anſwer the

SOPHISTRIES & ARTIFICES

OF POPISH

Prieſts and Jeſuits,

WHO

Make it their Practice to delude thoſe that are not well Grounded in their FAITH.

By a Miniſter of the Church of *England.*

BIBL. CANT. CAD.

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Printed, and are to be Sold by *R. Baldwin*, near the *Black Bull* in the *Old Bayly*, 1690.

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Admonition to the Reader, concerning the Authority and Uſe of the Holy Scriptures.

THe following Papers, being intended only for a private Satisfaction, and not for the publick View, are writ in a Stile agreeable to the Sex to which they are dedicated, and the few Arguments here and there added, either to explain or Illuſtrate a Text of Scripture, are ſuch as are more obvious to a Female Capacity, than perhaps the common way of Arguing uſed by one great Diſputant againſt another is. For it was no more my intent, than it was my Buſineſs, in writing to Women; who by Reaſon of their general want of Learning, underſtand nothing of Logical Reaſoning, and as little of Syllogiſmal Inferences, to endeavour to make a thing plain, by rendring it more unintelligible: But to make every thing as obvious and plain to the moſt ordinary Underſtanding, as I might, tho' my Words were never ſo homely; And though it is confeſt, The Lady to whom theſe Papers were eſpecially directed, is a Perſon endued with better Parts, and more Learning than others of her Sex generally are; yet I conſidered, That many more of her Society or Acquaintance, might be concerned in the Reading of them: And therefore I thought, as a plain Method would not be unplea-

ſant to the Lady her ſelf, ſo it would certainly be both more Acceptable and Profitable to others, not loaden with ſo much Sagacity and Underſtanding.

But, ſince in this Undertaking I have wholly relyed on the Teſtimony of the Scriptures, and have drawn all my Arguments from them; I think it proper to vindicate my Proceeding that way, by giving the Reader a curſory Account of the Supreme Authority of the Sacred Writings, conſiſting in two Particulars: The Firſt is, Their containing, fully, all things needful for our Salvation. And the Second, Their being ſufficient to determine Points of Doubt and Controverſie. In both which I ſhall ſtill make my Appeal to the Scriptures themſelves; and likewiſe intermix a few Teſtimones of the Fathers, not for Confirmation of the Scriptures Authority, for that is evident enough in it ſelf; but to ſhew the Opinion of thoſe great Pillars of the Church in a Matter, about which there is ſo great a Diſagreement betwixt us and the Church of *Rome*.

I begin therefore with the firſt Evidence of the Supreme Authority of the Scriptures; Their containing, fully, all things needful for our Salvation.

The Evangeliſt, *Joh.* 20. 30. tells us, *That Jeſus did many ſigns, in the preſence of his diſciples, which are not written in this book. But theſe*, ſays he, *are written, That ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the ſon of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.* "And "this Goſpel by S. *John*, may without Injury, be thought "to excel the other three, ſays S. *Cyril*; and he gives no weak Reaſons for it: One of which is, "That it "contains all things pertaining to Truth, which the "other do alſo, but not in ſo high a Strain: For "whereas the reſt do moſt Exquiſitely deſcribe the Ge-"nealogy of our Saviour, either deſcending from *Abra-*"*ham* to *Joſeph*, or aſcending from *Joſeph* to *Adam*;

Cyril. in Præf. in Joban.

"S. *John*

"S. *John* has not much laboured in these Matters, but "with an aspiring Mind seems to soar beyond Human "Possibility, and is not afraid, in expres's Words to set "down his Ineffable Generation; *In the beginning was "the word, and the word was with God, and the word was "God. The same was in the beginning with God:* And so "aspires directly to the Foundation of Divine Truth. Where, by the way, it will not be amiss to observe, That this Evangelist was the beloved Disciple of our Lord, and therefore it cannot reasonably be supposed he would conceal any thing from him that was necessary to be known: But on the contrary, he revealed more to him than was needful to be set down, in some Particulars whereof he was commanded to be Silent; as may be seen, *Rev.* 10. 4. But when any thing might be known, he is to declare it, Chap. 22. 10. and Chap. 1. 3. *They are blessed who read and hear the words of this prophecy, with an intent to keep those things which are written therein.* So then, though we are ignorant of some things, yet by what is written, we may sufficiently be acquainted with whatever is necessary for us to know.

S. *Paul*, *Acts* 20. after he had told the *Ephesians*, Verse 30, That *of their own selves should arise men, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.* At the 32 Verse he commends them to God, and to the Word of his Grace, *which*, he tells them, *is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* And lest it should be thought that he had broached some unwritten Traditions of his own, he professes Chap. 26. 22. That *having obtained help of God*, he *still continued, witnessing both to small and great, but saying no other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come.* Accordingly he tells the *Romans*, in his Epistle to them, Chap. 1. 16. That he *was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God*

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unto salvation, to every one that believeth. And *Chap.* 15. 4. *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through Patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* And says S. *Chrysostom*, "Wherefore are these things written, but that we should "learn them? For says he, "The Scriptures are ἀκριβῆ "ζυγὸν ἁπάντων καὶ γνώμονα καὶ κανόνα, of all, the most exact Bal- "lance, Guide and Rule. And according to S. *Athanasius*, they are ἀγκύρας καὶ ἐρείσματα τῆς πίστεως ἡμῶν, The Anchors and Support of our Faith. And *Irenæus* calls them στῦλον καὶ ἑδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκλινῆ, the immoveable Canon of Truth; and the Pillar and Foundation of our Faith. And we being sure of what the Apostle says, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16, 17. *That all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrin, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good Works*; may safely conclude with S. *Austin*, That the Rule of Faith is fixed and terminated in the Books of the Prophets and Apostles. It was the constant Opinion of this great Doctor of the Gentiles, That the Scriptures were of themselves able to make Men Wise unto Salvation. Neither is he alone; for St. *James* assures us, That they are able to save our Souls, *Jam.* 1. 21. And therefore St. *Peter* calls 'em a more sure word of Prophecy, than a Voice from Heaven; and says, That all Men would do well that they take good heed to 'em, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark place, 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. And our Lord himself, in the Parable, brings in *Abraham* telling the Rich Man in Hell, That his Brethren had *Moses* and the Prophets, whom let 'em hear, says he; for if they will not hear them, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the Dead, *Luk.* 16. 29. 31. Upon which words, St. *Chrysostom*'s Inference was, "That we should believe the Scriptures. "Though the Dead should rise, and though Angels "should

In Rom. hom. 9. *In* 2 *Cor. hom.* 13. *In synop. Athan.*

Iren. l. 3. *c.* 1.

Canonem fidei in Prophetarum & Apostolorum libris figi atque terminari. Aug de C. D. l. 11. *c.* 41.

"ſhould deſcend from Heaven, we muſt prefer the "Teſtimony of Scriptures before them: According to the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 1. 8. *Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed.* All which I take to be Indications plain enough of the ſufficiency of the Scriptures, as to all things pertaining to Salvation.

But beſides this, I ſaid they were alſo in themſelves ſufficient to determin Points of Controverſie.

The Pſalmiſt ſays of the Word of God, That it is a Lamp to his Feet, and a Light to his Path, *Pſal.* 119. 105. And therefore it was that he ſo often ſpeaks of ordering himſelf according to this Word, and prays ſo earneſtly to God to enable him to do it.

And thus the Prophet expoſtulates with the Jews, *Iſa.* 8. 19, 20. *When they ſhall ſay unto you, Seek unto them which have familiar ſpirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter; Should not a people ſeek unto their God? for the living, to the dead? To the law and to the teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.*

It was the way of the Apoſtles, on all occaſions, to have recourſe to the Scriptures. Thus St. *Peter*, in his Sermon to *Cornelius*, to confirm his Doctrin of the *Meſſias*, ſays, *To him give all the Prophets witneſs, that through his Name whoſoever believeth on him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins*, Act. 10. 43. And that it was the conſtant practice of St. *Paul*, no Man can deny that has had the leaſt converſe with his Writings; eſpecially that great Axiom of his, which has never been contradicted, That the Scriptures are given by Inſpiration of God, and are profitable for Doctrin, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, is a more than ordinary inſtance of his Opinion in this particular. And as it is written, was the only refuge of thoſe Primitive Builders of

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the Church. And it was the very ſame method that our Lord himſelf took to reprove the Tempter, *Matth.* 4. 4. *It is written, Man ſhall not live by bread alone,* &c. And *Verſ.* 7. *It is written, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* And *Verſ.* 10. *It is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God.* And thus he us'd always to bring the Teſtimonies of *Moſes* and the Prophets againſt the impious Objections of the Jews; very often telling them, That he did not ſpeak his own Words, but the Word of him that ſent him; that is, the Word of God.

And now, would it not be a thing to be wonder'd at, if the Holy Fathers of the Church ſhould be ignorant of this way of arguing? Or if they did know it, that they would not chuſe to follow his Example whom they pretended to worſhip and obey? But we have no cauſe to wonder at this, but rather at their ignorance, or wilful ſtubbornneſs, who pretend to be acquainted with them, and yet, ſeemingly at leaſt, aſſert their Sentiments and Practice in this matter, to be contrary to their Predeceſſors.

Epiſt. ad Euſtath. 80 *Idem Eth. Defin.* 80. *c.* 22. 6.

It was uſual with *Baſil* thus to expreſs himſel, ἠθεόπνευστος ἡμῖν διαιτησάτω γραφῆ; *Let the Scriptures, which are divinely inſpir'd, be Judge between us.* For, ſays he, *Whatſoever is contrary to them, is not of Faith, and therefore ſinful.* Every Word or Cauſe ought to be tried and confirm'd by the Holy Scriptures.

Cypr. ad Pomp. cont. Steph. Pap.

Neither does St. *Cyprian* come behind him in this particular; "If (ſays he) the Pipes through which "Water is conveyed into the City, ſhould be ſuddenly "deficient, ſhould we not go preſently to the Spring, that "thence we may know the cauſe of the defect, whether "the Spring it ſelf is dry, or whether the Pipes are ſtopt "by any thing which may hinder the courſe of the Wa-"ter? And ſo the Pipes being clear'd, the City may be "ſupplied with Water as before. So ought the Mini-

ſters

" sters of the Gospel to do: In matters of Doubt they " should go to our Lord and his Apostles, that they may " model their Actions by their Doctrin, as the Fountain " and Original of Divine Truth.

Tertullian likewise would accept of no Argument that was not drawn from the Scriptures. And by this he confuted the Hereticks of his time. " For (says he) " take away the Sophistry of the Heathen Philosophers, " which the Hereticks make use of, and when they come " to argue from the Scriptures they will not be able to " stand. *Tertul. de carne Christ. Idem de Resur. mort.*

St. *Chrysostom* says, That if any thing is asserted without the authority of the Scriptures to back it on, it leaves the Hearers in doubt. Οὐδὲν ἁπλῶς γεγραμμένης λέγομεν, says *Clemens Alexandrinus*; *We say nothing against the Scriptures.* And *Theodoret*, ἐγὼ δὲ μόνῃ πείθομαι τῇ θείᾳ γραφῇ; *I confide in the Scriptures only.* To which we may add his Testimony of the Saying of *Constantine the Great*, " That the Books of " the Evangelists and Apostles, and the Oracles of the " the ancient Prophets do evidently teach us, what we " are to think of the Divine Power. Therefore in every " seditious Controversie, let us discuss the Point in " question, by the Testimony of those divinely inspir'd " Writings. Whence we may see, that all the Fathers are not against us in this matter. *Chrys. in Psalm 95. Cl. Al. de Pet. Strom. lib. 6. Theod. dial. 1. cap. 6. Id. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 3.*

I think *Origen* may come in for one on our side. For in his Comment upon the Sixteenth Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, having explained those Admonitions of the Apostle, *vers.* 17, 18. and coming to *vers.* 19. where the Apostle tells the *Romans*, That their Obedience is come abroad unto all Men: And that he is therefore glad on their behalf, " The Apostle (says " he) therefore rejoyces over those that were obedient, " being sure that as he had taught them not to use that " general Obedience which they indifferently pay to all

" Men, for that which is due to God only, whereby " they obey God rather than Man; ſo this Obedience was " embraced by them before the other. For 'tis indeed " an argument of no little diſcretion, but of a quick and " moſt piercing Judgment, if we can diſcern what Opi- " nion is to be followed, and what is rather to be reject- " ed. In a word, our Lord himſelf in the Goſpel ſays, " *Beware of them which come to you in ſheeps cloathing, but* " *inwardly are devouring wolves.* Therefore a watchful " Soul and ſetled Mind are required in order to our di- " ſcovering the plain ſimplicity of Sheep, or the more " hidden malice and greedineſs of Wolves. Whence " we may learn what great danger they are in, who " neglect the ſtudy of the Holy Scriptures, from which " only they can be furniſhed with ſuch a knowledge " and diſcretion.

St. *Auſtin* has an Expreſſion, which makes a great bluſter in the World; "I would not believe the Goſpel " (ſays he) if the Authority of the Catholick Church " did not move me to it. Upon this the Authority of the Church is magnified above the Authority of the Scriptures.

But if St. *Auſtin* did not intend any ſuch thing, where are we then? He expreſs'd himſelf once to this purpoſe,

Aug. Conf. l. 6. c. 5. " Thou, O God, haſt aſſur'd me, that not they who " believ'd thy Books, which with ſo great Authority " thou haſt eſtabliſh'd in almoſt all the World; but " they who did not, were culpable: Neither are they " to be heard, who ſhall ask me, how I know, that thoſe " Books are given to Men by the Spirit of One moſt true " God. Which ſhews, that he did not altogether rely on the Teſtimony of the Church, which was only out- ward; but chiefly to the inward Witneſs of the Holy Ghoſt in his Conſcience. But we may know more of his Mind by more of his Words; "We (ſays he) do

" not

" not bring a falſe Ballance, that we may make things " weigh what we pleaſe, and how we pleaſe, and ſo " give judgment what is light, and what heavy: But " we give you the divine Ballance of the Holy Scrip- " tures, the Treaſures of the Lord, and by that we tell " you what is heavy; yet not we, but the Lord himſelf; " who having weighed all things already, we tell you " from him what is heavy, *&c.* And can we think that Great Father ever intended to ſet up the Authority of the Church above the Scriptures? He does not ſay, We tell you from the Church what is light, and what heavy; but, we tell you from the Scriptures. And thus again, " There are (ſays he) certain Books of the " Lord, to whoſe Authority we wholly aſſent, which " we firmly believe, and in all things obey. In them " let us ſeek the Church, by them let us diſcuſs our " Cauſe. Now, if St. *Auſtin* did really believe the Scriptures, on no other account than barely the Churches Teſtimony, why does he ſay, He muſt find the Church in the Scriptures? This would be to run round in an indeterminate circle; firſt to look for the Church in the Scriptures, and then to ſearch for the Scriptures in the Church. I don't ſee how theſe can ſtand together. But let it be as it will, we may with more ſafety give credit to what a Man is conſtant in, than to what he ſays but once, or, it may be, never at all; and ſo we may aſſure our ſelves of the conceſſion of this Holy Father to what we aſſert, That the Scriptures are the ſupreme Decider of Controverſies. The only thing needful to be added to what has been already produc'd, is, That nothing ought to be put to, or taken from the Word of God.

Idem. cont. Donat. l. 2. c. 6.

Id. de unit. Eccl. c. 3.

Bellarmin acknowledges the Scriptures to be a Rule, but ſays 'tis only partly ſo; for the Scriptures joyn'd with Traditions, make one perfect Rule.

But we have ſeen that the Scriptures alone are a per-

fect Rule; and, "An Infallible Rule (ſays St. *Baſil*)
Baſil. cont. Eunom. l. 1. "ought to be ſo, without addition or diminution. And
Id. Conf. Fid. "further, That it is a manifeſt departing from the Faith,
"and an evidence of Pride, either to take away any thing
"from what is written, or to add any thing that is not
written; for our Lord has ſaid, *My ſheep hear my voice*. And
Jerom. in Matth. 23. "(ſays St. *Jerom*) Whatever does not come from the
"Holy Scriptures, is as eaſily condemn'd as approv'd.

Euſeb. Hiſt l. 3. c. 32. *Euſebius* tells us, "That after the Death of the
"Apoſtles, though the Scriptures were extant, yet the
"Church did not long continue an unſpotted Virgin,
"but Hereſies and Corruptions of the Goſpel encreaſed
"apace. And then I would fain know what method the Orthodox Doctors took to purge and refine the Church again? I ſuppoſe it may be anſwer'd, that, A General Council was to repreſent the whole Church, and to determine the Points in Controverſie. Granting this, the next Queſtion will be, which way the Doctors aſſembled in Council proceeded in this great Affair? Did they appeal to the Church? The moſt impious Hereticks would confidently affirm, That only they were of the True Church. Wou'd they appeal to the Fathers? There were many Learned Men who in their Writings maintain'd the worſt of Hereſies. Wou'd they appeal to Apoſtolical Traditions? The Founders of many of the greateſt Hereſies, lived in the Times of the Apoſtles; and on that ſcore, had as good a plea for their knowing their Sentiments, as any of the Orthodox Fathers could have. I am certain the firſt *Nicene* Council took no ſuch way, but on all occaſions urg'd the Scriptures againſt the Opinions of thoſe Hereticks they were to deal with, as might be ſhewn at large, if it was abſolutely neceſſary to our purpoſe.

At preſent let us content our ſelves with a few Teſtimonies of the Fathers againſt ſuch proceedings.

And

And firſt, againſt Appealing to the Churches Cuſtome; St *Cyprian* ſays, "a Cuſtome which ſome have taken up, "ought not to prevail againſt the Truth; for Cuſtome "without the Truth, is but the Ornament of an Error: "For which Reaſon let us forſake the Error of ſuch a Cu- "ſtome, and follow the Truth. And when S. *Auſtin* bids us ſeek the Church in the Scriptures; he cannot intend, in my Opinion, That we ſhould follow the Church in any thing repugnant to the Scriptures: But beſides, A Rule of Faith ought to be Perfect. But *Origen* tells us, That as "on every Floor there is Chaff as well as Wheat, ſo is "the Church on Earth, ſome part Wheat, and the reſt "Chaff. And upon *Matth.* 21. 14. where it is ſaid, That *the blind and the lame came into the Temple to Chriſt, and he healed them*: "The Moral Conſtruction of this, ſays he, "is, That in the Church all cannot ſee, neither "can all walk Upright; but ſome are Blind and others "Lame. To which he immediately applies this Reme- "dy, as the moſt effectual: They, ſays he, who are "ſenſible of their own Blindneſs, ſince there is no other "way to be rid of it, but by the Word of God, they "ſhould apply themſelves to that, and they cannot miſs "of a Cure. Which is enough to prove the Inſufficien- cy of the Churches Cuſtomes or Authority, as to Mat- ters of Faith at leaſt.

Cypr. ad Pomp. cont. Steph. Pap.

Orig. in Ezech. hom. 1.

Id. in Matth. hom. 15.

Secondly, Neither will the Teſtimonies of the Fathers be of any Force in this Particular: For a Rule of Faith muſt be full of Knowledge, and ſufficiently able to in- ſtruct us. But what ſays S. *Auſtin* of himſelf? "I am "not only ignorant, ſays he, in many other Things, but "even in the Holy Scriptures themſelves, I am yet to "learn more than I know already. And thus he elſe- "where expreſſes himſelf: To the Books of the Scriptures "only, which are called Canonical, do I owe this Ho- "nour, that I firmly believe, That none of their Pen-

Aug. ep. 119.

Ep. ad Hier.

"Men

"men have err'd in any thing they have written. But I "eſteem other Writers according to their Sanctity and "Learning: I do not think any thing true, meerly be- "cauſe it was their Opinion. Which very well agrees with that Axiom of *Tertullian*; "If, ſays he, a Biſhop, "or Deacon, if a Widow or Maid, if a Doctor, or even "a Martyr ſhould err from the Rule, would the Error "be e'r the Truer or Better for their Sakes? We do not "prove the Faith by the Perſons, but the Perſons by the "Faith. And the Acknowledgment of *Biel* is to the ſame purpoſe; "That the Authority of the Fathers com- "pells no Man to aſſent to their Sayings, unleſs they "build on the Holy Scriptures, or Divine Revelation. On this account therefore S. *Auſtin* might well cry out, "Let our Writings be withdrawn, that the Book of God may be introduced.

Tertul. de præſcr. hæret.

Biel ſup. Can. Miſſ. l. 41.

Aug. in Pſal. 57.

And as for Apoſtolical Traditions, let the Teſtimony of *Irenæus* ſerve for all: "By the Apoſtles, ſays he, the "Goſpel came down to us, which they then preached; "and afterward by the Will of God, they delivered to "us in the Scriptures, what was to be the future Foun- "dation and Pillar of our Faith.

Iren. l. 3. c. 1.

Now, if neither the Cuſtomes of the Church, nor the Judgment of the Fathers, nor Tradition, can be a perfect Rule of Faith; no more can all theſe united in a General Council be ſo: For a Rule muſt be in every reſpect perfect. But we have ſeen, That the Church is in many reſpects Defective, and the Fathers ſubject to Ignorance and Error: And if *Irenæus* may be credited, The Apoſtles preached nothing contrary to what they have left us in Writing, and therefore there can be no Place for Apoſtolical Traditions. So that a Rule, which is Imperfect, and Defective in every Part, muſt needs be ſo in the whole. And *Bellarmin* himſelf has proved, That the Decrees of General Councils cannot be a per-

Bellarm. de Concil. l. 2. c. 12.

fect

fect Rule, becauſe they cannot pretend to immediate Divine Revelation; That they may Err in ſome things, and in many of their Definitions, they conclude only Probably. But a Rule of Faith ought to be every way Perfect, and to conclude neceſſarily. And ſuch an abſolute Perfect Rule the Scriptures appear to be, not only from their own Teſtimony, but from Teſtimonies of the greateſt Pillars of the Church, in the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Centuries. And therefore if any Man's Intereſt has led him to a contrary Judgment in the later Ages of the Church, his Opinions ought not to be ſet up as a Standard againſt Antiquity joyn'd with Truth. From hence, then, we may infer, what has been already aſſerted, That the Scriptures being of themſelves a perfect and Un-erring Rule, nothing muſt be put to, or taken from them. To which purpoſe, beſides what has been produced already, the Reader may give himſelf the trouble of Peruſing the following Texts; *Deut.* 12. 32. *Joſh.* 1. 7. *Prov.* 30. 6. *Gal.* 1. 8. and 3. 15. *Rev.* 22. 18, 19. And let him learn the Danger of Adding or Taking away, that is, Doing any thing contrary to the Scriptures. From theſe *Lev.* 10. 2. *Iſai.* 1. 12, 13, 14, and 66. 3. *Hoſ.* 9. 15. *Matth.* 15. 6, 9. *Mark* 7. 9. *Gal.* 4. 10. From all which Texts, will evidently appear the Invalidity of any thing that is not built upon the true Foundation, and the danger of being led away by ſuch Vanities. And ſo I hope, I have ſufficiently vindicated my Relyance on the Teſtimony of the Scriptures in the Buſineſs of the following Undertaking.

I ſhall only trouble the Reader with two or three neceſſary Cautions, concerning the right Uſe and Underſtanding of thoſe Sacred Writings, and then give him his Liberty to proceed.

I. If any Man will make choice of the Scriptures for his Guide in matters that concern his Well-being here and

and hereafter, he must have a care of believing every Spirit. We must not take things of such Moment on Trust, meerly because they are asserted by one that Pretends to great Learning or Inspiration; for we are to look on the Gentlemen of these Times, as such as will make the best they can of every Word, when they meet with one of an ordinary Capacity.

Therefore, II. It behoveth every Man that hath any regard to his own Safety, to search into these things himself; to read the Holy Scriptures diligently, that so he may learn from them whether such things are true or no.

But as I am now Writing to those of the meanest Rank, in Learning lat east, It is necessary that I caution such Readers of the Scriptures, against laying too much stress on the literal Interpretation of a Text: For the Holy Ghost very often makes use of Metaphors and other Obscurities, wherein the Sense is not obvious to every Eye: And tho', as S. *Austin* says, *There is nothing so obscure in one Place which in another is not made plain:* Yet it is not supposed that an ordinary Reader knows how to find that Place out, or if he does, that he has Judgment enough to satisfie himself. For the Scriptures consist of a Soul and a Body: The Body is the Letter, and the Soul is the true Interpretation. *Every Man, therefore,* says *Origen, that desires to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, must have his Eye on every Word, for every Nation has a different way of speaking; let him therefore mind rather what is signified, than with what Words it is expressed. For there are some things, which no Human Words can explain, but they are only conceivable in an honest Understanding. By which Rule also we come to the Knowledge and Understanding of the Holy Scriptures, that what we read is not to be understood according to the Letter, but according to the Divinity of that Holy Spirit which inspired it.* Wherefore the Honest Reader will do well to take care, That he is not drawn by the

De princip. lib. 4.

the Letter out of the right way. And to this end the beſt advice I can give him, is, Before he preſumes to read, to beg the Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit to direct and enlighten his Underſtanding. And when he meets with an obſcure Text, let him pray again, and beſides that, communicate his Doubt to ſome learned Miniſter, of whoſe Integrity he is in ſome Meaſure aſſured, and by theſe means he may be fully ſatisfied. And thus he will ſhew himſelf an humble Enquirer, and manifeſt to the World, That his Proceedings are from a Principle of Honeſty, that he ſearches only for a right Information; and on theſe Accounts he has a Right to that encouraging Precognition of S. *Cyril*, in his Preface to his Comments on S. *John*'s Goſpel: *The Doctrin of all the Evangeliſts*, ſays he, *is moſt excellent, and of Divine Extraction: For as it overlooks all things, as it were from the top of a high Tower: It ſo amply accommodates it ſelf to all that follow it, that whoever thirſts after Divine Truth (if with an honeſt Mind, he enquires into the Senſe of the Scriptures) he may eaſily meet with whatever concerns him. But this gracious Satisfaction is not conferred on thoſe, who make a raſh Search, and are rather led by Human Reaſons than the Authority of the Scriptures, (foraſmuch as the Holy Ghoſt does not dwell with a depraved Soul, nor does he throw his precious Jewels before Swine, to be trodden under foot) but pours out his Truth into the Hearts of all Religious Searchers after it, who not affecting Cavils and Diſputes, purſue the ready Road to the Kingdom, in ſincerity.*

To conclude, *That true Meat and Drink which we have from the Word of God*, ſays S. *Jerome*, *is the true Knowledge of the Scriptures.* And all Men having the greateſt Encouragement imaginable to read thoſe Holy Writings, if they read them to good Purpoſes, and not to wreſt them to their own Ends; let us go to that Fountain of Divine Truth, from whence the meaneſt Reader

Hier. in Eccl. c. 3.

may learn whatever is neceſſary for him to know. For, ſays the Royal Pſalmiſt, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul, the teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple. The ſtatutes of the Lord are right, rejoycing the Heart: The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be deſired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, ſweeter alſo than honey, and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them are his Servants warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward,* Pſal. 19. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. And our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf, bids us *Search the Scriptures*, Joh. 5. 39. I ſhall conclude therefore with that Pathetick Exhortation of S. *Chryſoſtome*; *That all Men would read the Scriptures, and that not curſorily, but with the greateſt Diligence; that they would get them Bibles as Phyſick for their Souls: And if they will not read the whole, let them turn to the New Teſtament, and read the Goſpels, Acts of the Apoſtles and Epiſtles, thoſe excellent Teachers: If any Miſchance befall us, come hither as to a Store-houſe full of wholeſome Remedies; hence take Relief and Comfort in all Afflictions, whether loſs of Goods, or Friends, or Life it ſelf; let them not only read once, but turn over theſe Writings again and again, and faſten what they read to their Minds, that they may be ſure to remember it: For this is the Cauſe of all Evils, That Men are ignorant in the Scriptures. If we go to War without Weapons, how can we be Safe? Men that are armed may overcome, at leaſt in a Capacity to ſecure themſelves; but thoſe who are unarmed muſt fall. Therefore do not lay all the Burthen upon the Miniſters Shoulders; be Sheep, but not as Creatures void of Reaſon, but as Men that know ſomething*, &c. And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the *Iſrael* of God. *Amen.*

Chryſ. in Col. 3. hom. 9.

Gal. 6. 16.

A Letter to a Lady, &c.

MADAM,

THE Tenderneſs of the Female Sex renders it more obnoxious to the Sophiſtry of the Times; and the deſire of Information in Matters of Religion, may make them the more earneſt in reading the Pieces ſent abroad in the preſent Controverſie. And I preſume I need not tell you of the ſubtilty of ſome Men, who to make their Proceedings the more effectual, direct their Inſinuations eſpecially to thoſe they think are leaſt able to withſtand them: Your own Experience, I ſuppoſe, may be Evidence ſufficient as to this Particular.

There are a ſort of Men in the World who live by their Wits, and will neglect no opportunity to inſinuate ſtrange fancies into the Minds of the weaker ſort of People, to make them believe a thing is White, upon no other ground than becauſe it is not Black, though it may be Crimſon in grain. *Of this ſort are they* (ſays the Apoſtle, *2 Tim. 3. 6.) who creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women*, &c. And he would have us know, *That in the laſt days*, by means of theſe Men, *perilous times ſhall come.* The whole Prophecy is interpreted of the Jeſuites, by Men of Learning in the Church of *Rome*, as you may ſee at large in a little Book (call'd *The Moral Practice of the Jeſuites*) publiſh'd by the Doctors of the *Sorbon*. And theſe Men have Impudence enough to intrude themſelves into Ladies Cloſets, and venturing on their good nature, to uſe their skill and ſophiſtical endeavours to cajole them into a decoy. They'll Reform the Church of *Rome* in a quarter of an hour, and wipe off all Imputa-

tions of Error, while one may ſay, *What's this?* if you'll believe their Stories. They'll tell you that the things which have ſo often been prov'd againſt that Church, are all Lies: That no ſuch Errors are embrac'd by her; but that the Church of *England*, if their bold Aſſertions will do the buſineſs, has only been guilty; and if She had not given her Sons Learning enough to defend her Innocence, their Forgeries muſt have paſt for current. But I hope, Madam, you know the Church of *England* better, than to give credit to every mouth that is open againſt Her. And I know you have a diſcerning faculty, beyond many of your Sex, whereby to judge of Opinions, right and wrong. However, give me leave to preſent you with a ſmall parcel of *Scripture Teſtimonies* againſt ſome of the Principal Errors of the *Roman* Church: I ſay *Scripture Teſtimonies*, becauſe though there are many excellent Pieces publiſh'd by our Learned Divines, yet they are too full of Learning for moſt Female capacities, and the Treatiſes large on every Subject; when, as I think the Scriptures the Supreme Judge in Matters of Religion, ſo I ſuppoſe a ſhort Catalogue of Texts from thence, directly oppoſite to ſuch Tenets as we juſtly charge upon the Church of *Rome*, and by that means a Refutation of moſt of thoſe Tenets in one ſhort Eſſay, will be more profitable, as I hope it will be more acceptable to an ordinary Underſtanding. So that upon this account, as you will hereby, with more eaſe, be furniſh'd with what you may be ſure is true, being drawn from the Fountain of Truth, you will, I hope, be the more eaſily induc'd to pardon my Undertaking, as deſigning nothing but Honeſty.

I have choſen this way of Writing to you, Madam, Firſt, becauſe I know you delight in converſing with the Holy Writings, and ſo I ſhall be more conformable to your Inclinations. And Secondly, though I reverence

the

the Judgment of the Fathers, of the Church, and General Councils duly aſſembled, and not ſway'd by popular Inſolence; yet, as I once objected to one by word of mouth, without receiving a ſatisfactory Anſwer, The Church of *Rome* ſays, That *we* have Falſe Copies of the Fathers; and we anſwer, That *they* have corrupted the True; ſo that one of us muſt needs be in the wrong: And how ſhall we be ſatisfied in this, without comparing them to the Teſtimonies of the Scriptures? And as for General Councils, they have, of late, been purg'd, or rather perverted by the Over-ruling Power of Popes and their Popular Factions, inſomuch, that when they began to act againſt the Intereſt of the See of *Rome*, though never ſo juſtly, they were no longer allowed the liberty due to General Councils: And then what dependence can we have from them? And Laſtly, the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, can be no better a Decider of Controverſies, than the other two, becauſe that muſt be prov'd, if poſſible, from the Scriptures. So that, when all other Inſtruments have been tried, the Scriptures will prove the only Infallible Touch-ſtone. From theſe and the like Conſiderations, this Piece was at firſt conceiv'd, and is now produc'd for your Service, and for ſuch of your Female Companions or Acquaintance as you ſhall think fit to communicate it to; and I hope it will give Satisfaction.

Be pleas'd therefore to conſider, that 'tis the duty of every Chriſtian to read and be acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. And though the Council of *Trent* denied the reading of them to the Laity, pretending that the Vulgation of them was the cauſe of ſo many Hereſies abroad in the World; yet, by the leave of the Fathers aſſembled in that Particular General Council, we cann't conceive how a Country Plough-Jobber, ſhould, by reading the Scriptures, be the Author of an Opinion, either

Orthodox.

Orthodox or Erroneous: But, as might eaſily be prov'd if it were to the preſent purpoſe, the Original of all Sects were Men, who to ſhew their Parts and Learning, took upon them to ſcrutiniſe and enquire into the Senſe of Holy Writ, and ſo ſpread the prime Infection. I will trouble you with but an Inſtance or two to this purpoſe, and ſo proceed.

Arius, that known Heretick, as well for his Learning, as the many Proſelites he gain'd to his Party, meeting with that Text, *Joh.* 17. 3. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*; thought of a trick, by miſplacing a Point, to ſeclude Chriſt from being True God. In the Original 'tis, *This is life eternal, ἵνα γινώσκωσι σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν, &c. To know thee only to be true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* But he puts the Comma after the Particle μόνον (*only*), and ſo corrupts the Senſe by miſplacing the Point; a trick which certainly none but a Scholar could have thought on. Thus we find *Gregory the Great* openly aſſerting, That whoever ſhould call himſelf Univerſal Biſhop, was Antichriſt; but the ſucceeding Biſhops of *Rome* diſputed the contrary, and arrogated to themſelves the Title.

I might likewiſe urge the Feuds of the *Franciſcans* and *Dominicans*, and other Orders of the Church of *Rome*, to prove that all Quarrellings and jangling Diſputes about Matters of Religion, have in all Ages been broach'd by Men of Learning. But to come nearer home; would it not be very abſurd, to imagin that ſuch a ſilly fancy as *Quakeriſm* could ever have been heard of, or ſo long upheld among us, if ſome ſuch Man as *Penn*, who is thought no great ſtranger in a College of Fame, had not at firſt inſinuated it into ſome poor ignorant People, who were not able to reſiſt his Logick, or it may be, were more taken up in their worldly Employments, than the Study of Holy Scriptures? And indeed it is not probable,

that

that one who is better skill'd in the management of a Plough, than a Logical Argument, ſhould be able to define in Matters of Faith and Doctrin. It may be ſooner prov'd that the principal Authors and Abetters of moſt of our Diviſions, came from *Rome*, than that they ſprung from ignorant People reading the Scriptures. And if you pleaſe to peruſe theſe Papers, you'll find, that the Chuch of *Rome* in that Council, had other Ends in denying the Scriptures to the Common People, than the Suppreſſing of Sectaries, as they pretended. I come therefore to the buſineſs.

I propos'd to your Conſideration, the Duty incumbent on every Chriſtian to read and underſtand the Holy Scriptures. This I preſent to your Meditation in the firſt place, as Preparatory to that which is to follow: It being my intent, in this Undertaking, to have to do with nothing but Scripture Quotations. And ſo I begin.

Deut. 6. 6— *And theſe words which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thine heart. And thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lyeſt down, and when thou riſeſt up. And thou ſhalt bind them for a ſign upon thine hand, and they ſhall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou ſhalt write them upon the door poſts of thy houſe, and on thy gates.*——— The words were ſpoken to the whole Congregation of *Iſrael*, and need not be explain'd.

Deut. 17. 18.—*And it ſhall be when the king of Iſrael ſitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he ſhall write him a copy of this Law in a book, out of that which is before the Prieſts the Levites; and it ſhall be with him, and he ſhall read therein all the days of his life*, &c.— Where give me leave to take Notice, That it being impoſſible to keep the Scriptures from the Eye of the more Ingenious Gentry,

try, they have been furniſhed with a Vulgar Latin Tranſlation of the Bible, which they call (though falſly enough) St. *Jerome*'s; and left the Corruptions, wherewith they had (prudently) loaded it, ſhould be diſcovered, Pope *Sixtus* the V. in the Year 1578, publiſhed a *Greek* Copy, purpoſely forg'd by Cardinal *Carapha*, to make Men believe, That the *Latin* was agreeable to the Original.

Joſh. 1. 8.——*This Book of the law ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayeſt obſerve to do all that is written therein*—— This is the Pſalmiſt's Character of a Good Man, *Pſal.* 1. 2. *His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.* This was the Commendation of *Apollos*, *Acts* 18. 24. *That he was not only an eloquent Man, but mighty in the Scriptures:* And this was the Confidence of the Apoſtle concerning the *Romans*, *Rom.* 15. After he had told them, verſe 4. That *whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*; At the 14. Verſe he concludes, *And I my ſelf alſo am perſwaded of you, my brethren, that ye alſo are full of goodneſs, filled with all knowledge, and able to admoniſh one another.*

Col. 3. 16.——*Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all wiſdom, teaching and admoniſhing one another in pſalms and hymns and ſpiritual ſongs*, &c.— And Ch. 4. 16. *When this epiſtle is read amongſt you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewiſe read the Epiſtle from Laodicea.* Parallel to which is his Command to the *Theſſalonians*, 1 Epiſt. 5. 27. *I charge you by the Lord, that this epiſtle be read to all the holy brethren.*—— And indeed it would be ſome Comfort, if they of the Church of *Rome* could but have the Goſpel read in the Congregation, purely and without Adulteration, in a Tongue

Tongue underſtood by the Common People. This would be much more to Edification than a few Stories out of the Golden Legend, or the Hiſtory of S. *George*'s killing the Dragon; which I aſſure you, Madam, is a part of the Service of his Day, and in their Prayer to him they ſolemnly commemorate this Act of his, as if it were as True as the Goſpel. But,

Laſtly, S. *Peter*, ſpeaking of the Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*; ſays, *We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts: knowing this firſt, That no prophecy of the ſcripture is of any private interpretation*, 2 Pet. 1. 19, 20. I give you both Verſes, becauſe I know ſome Men would be apt to object the laſt to the firſt: But we may obſerve, That if S. *Peter* does condemn the Private Interpretation of Scriptures, he does not condemn the Private Reading of them, but ſays, That *all men will do well, if they take good heed to them, as to a more ſure word than a voice from heaven.*

And thus, Madam, I think it ſufficiently appears, That it is the neceſſary Duty of every Chriſtian to Read, and be well acquainted with the Scriptures, they being the *pillar and ground of truth, and the power of God unto ſalvation.*

But, if after all, it is objected, as I ſuppoſe it will, That the Scriptures are dark, and hard to be underſtood; be pleaſed to conſider with me theſe few Texts.

Deut 30. 11.——*This commandment which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off; it is not in heaven, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Who ſhall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it? neither is it beyond the ſea, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Who ſhall go over the ſea for us, and bring it unto us, that*

we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it ——

Pſalm 119. 130.——*The entrance of thy words giveth light: It giveth underſtanding to the ſimple.*

Prov. 14. 6.—*A ſcorner ſeeketh wiſdom, and findeth it not; but knowledge is eaſie to him that underſtandeth.*——I take theſe to be ſufficient indications of the Plainneſs and Intelligibleneſs of the Law. But we have God's own Word, if he may be believed, That the Goſpel ſhould be much more eaſie to be underſtood.

Jer. 31. 33.—*But this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael, after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and they ſhall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord; for they ſhall all know me, from the leaſt unto the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord.*—— And that the Underſtanding of the Scriptures is not reſerved for the more Learned of Mankind only, is plain from our Saviours own Words, *Matth.* 11. 25. *I thank thee, O father, Lord, of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto Babes: Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* And when his Diſciples asked him, *Why he ſpake to the Jews in parables,* he anſwered and ſaid unto them, *Becauſe it is given unto you to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given,* Matth. 13. 11. And we know that his Diſciples were, for the moſt part Poor, Ignorant, Unlearned; and among the Jews came very often the Scribes, Phariſees and great Doctors. All that I ſhall add, at preſent, to compleat this Subject, is, That Ignorance in the Scriptures is very Dangerous.

1. Becauſe it is generally the Cauſe of Mens committing all maner of ſins.

Isai. 1. 3.—*The ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his masters crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.*——God Almighty had been so Gracious to them, as to give them his law first, for them to read, and the Prophets afterwards to explain it, that they might know and understand his Will therein; but they would neither read the one, nor give ear to the other. And this, without doubt, was the cause of God's crying out, *How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? for my people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge,* Jer. 4. 21. and Chap. 5. 21. *Hear now this, O foolish people, and without Understanding, which have eyes and see not, ears and hear not.* Because they would neither read the Law, nor give Ear to the Prophets, therefore they were justly called *Sottish Children, a foolish people, and without understanding;* therefore they were *wise to do evil, but not to do good.* For it is most certain, The Devil will be sure to make his best of Ignorance, and use his utmost endeavour to keep Men in it; because the more Light Men have, the more Work they can do, and the better they are informed, the better they will act here, and so he will be like to lose their Company hereafter. I think, then, that S. *Austin*'s *tolle, lege,* will be good Advice to all that are willing to live Virtuous Lives; and as *Luther*'s advice to Governours, was to read the Books of the Kings, for their Information how to Rule well; so, that all Men would read the Holy Scriptures in general, would be good Counsel, because they afford the best Instructions for living well.

2. Ignorance in the Scriptures is dangerous, because it is the greatest Reason of Mens running into all sorts of Errors.

When the Sadducees propoſed to our Saviour the Buſineſs of the Woman that had had ſeven Husbands, asking him, *whoſe wife ſhe ſhould be at the reſurrection?* falſly ſuppoſing, If there ever would be a Reſurrection, there would alſo be Marrying and giving in Marriage at the Reſurrection; Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.* And here, Madam, I might take notice of the Subtlety of the Church of *Rome*, in denying the Scriptures to the Laity, becauſe maintaining ſo many Errors ſo directly contrary to Scriptures, that any diſcerning Eye muſt needs diſcover them: Such are Purgatory, Pope's Pardons, Adoration of Images, praying to Saints and Angels, and the like. But our Lord ſaid of the Phariſees, *Matth.* 15. 14. *Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind: And if the blind lead the blind both ſhall fall into the ditch.* I ſhall ſay nothing therefore to theſe, at preſent, but proceed,

3. To ſhew, That Ignorance in the Scriptures is very Dangerous, becauſe as it is the cauſe of Sin and Error, ſo by Sin and Error, it muſt conſequently be the cauſe of Deſtruction.

Iſay 5. 13.—*Therefore my people are gone into captivity, becauſe they have no knowledge; and their honourable Men are famiſhed, and their multitude dryed up with thirſt. Therefore hell hath enlarged her ſelf, and opened her mouth without meaſure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoyceth ſhall deſcend into it.*

Pſalm 95. 10.—*Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and ſaid, It is a people that do err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom, therefore, I ſware in my wrath, that they ſhould not enter into my reſt.*

Prov. 1. 24.——*Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye*

have

have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof; I alſo will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirl-wind, when diſtreſs and anguiſh come upon you: Then ſhall ye call upon me, but I will not anſwer, ye ſhall ſeek me, but ye ſhall not find me; for that ye hated knowledge, and did not chuſe the fear of the Lord.—— But to come a little nearer home; Chriſt Jeſus has brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Goſpel: But this, ſays he, *is the condemnation*, by way of Eminence, *That light is come into the world, and men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil: For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved; but he that does truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God*, Joh. 3. 19. And ſurely, Madam, If they that deny us the Scriptures, had not ſomething to be aſhamed of, they would not ſhew themſelves ſo much concerned to keep People in Darkneſs. It muſt needs be a Device of the Devil, to keep Men in Ignorance, that they might be damned; according to the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3. *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; In whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine upon them. But we know that Chriſt will one day be revealed in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Theſſal. 1. 8. If it is objected, That this Text ſpeaks of Heathen Perſecutors; we may anſwer, That thoſe Chriſtians, who are not acquainted with, and conſequently, not obedient to the Goſpel of Chriſt, are worſe than Heathens. I beſeech you, Madam, to conſider, If it was through Ignorance of the Scriptures, the Jews crucified

fied the Lord of Glory, as the Apoſtle ſays it was, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. We that are Chriſtians, had beſt take heed, That we do not through Ignorance crucifie him again. And if it was a Shame for the *Corinthians* not to know the Scriptures, in the very dawning and twilight of Chriſtianity, 1 *Cor.* 15. 34, what an abominable ſhame muſt it needs be, for us, after almoſt ſeventeen hundred Years, to know no more, or it may be, not ſo much?

To conclude this Point: The Apoſtle dedicates his Firſt *Epiſtle* to the *Corinthians*, *To All that in Every place call on the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And what he ſhould do ſo for, unleſs he intended it ſhould be read by All, I can't imagin. If he intended it only for the Fathers of that Church, he might in fewer words, and conſequently with leſs trouble, have ſaid, To the Elders of the Church at *Corinth*; or elſe directed it to the Biſhop of that Church only. But he knew the Scriptures were able to make Men *wiſe unto ſalvation*, and therefore would have all Men read them. And our bleſſed Saviour knew that the Jews thought they had Eternal Life in the Scriptures, therefore he bids 'em *Search* them, *Joh.* 5. 39. The Injunction is the ſame upon Chriſtians alſo. And then certainly, if the Captain and Author of our Salvation bids us *Search*, we may, notwithſtanding the Inſinuations of ſome bold Men to the contrary. By what Rule elſe ſhould we try the Spirits, whether they be of God, as St. *John* adviſeth us, 1 *Ep.* 4. 1. if not by the Rule of God's Word? Upon this account therefore, among others, we are bound to read, ſearch, and be well acquainted with the Scriptures. I preſume then, after all that has been produc'd to prove this firſt Poſition, what the Evangeliſt ſays of the *Revelations*, Chap. 1. 3. may on good grounds be attributed to the reſt of the Sacred Writings; *Bleſſed is he that readeth, and they*

that

that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein.

And now, Madam, having made good from Scripture Teſtimonies, the Neceſſity of being acquainted with the Scriptures; though I have already gone beyond the ordinary bounds of an Epiſtle, yet I crave leave to treſpaſs a little farther on your Patience, in giving you a curſory view of ſome of the Principal Doctrins of the Church of *Rome*, and demonſtrating how contrary they are to the Word of Truth. In order to which, I ſhall with all poſſible brevity enquire,

I. Whether any Man can do more than he ought to do?

II. Whether any Man by his own Works can merit Heaven?

III. To whom it belongeth to Forgive Sins?

IV. Whether the Scriptures warrant Worſhiping of Images, or Praying to Saints and Angels?

V. Whether there is any ſuch Place as Purgatory?

VI. Whether the Maſs is a Sacrifice for Quick and Dead?

VII. Whether the Doctrin of Tranſubſtantiation can be maintain'd by Scripture?

The firſt Enquiry muſt be, whether any Man can do more than he ought to do? Where we are to conſider, That though a Man, as a Chriſtian, is in the ſtate of Grace:

Grace, yet he is not in the ſtate of Innocence, nor can be, till he arrives at the ſtate of Glory, where all Infirmities will be done away. For as he is Fleſh and Blood, liable to be tempted to evil, and apt to commit it, he muſt expect to meet with Afflictions and Croſſes from the World without, and the Suggeſtions and Temptations of the Devil from within: And being naturally more prone to Evil than Good, I think it a hard thing to ſay, That 'tis in his power to do more Good than is requir'd he ſhould do, and a harder to prove it.

Under the Law, Men were not able to keep the Law perfectly, nor to walk in the Commandments of God as they ought. For *Moſes* himſelf, who took them from God's mouth, and gave them to the *Iſraelites*, err'd in ſo much, that he muſt not enter the *promiſed Land*. That Text, *Joſh.* 11. 15. has been objected by ſome Gentlemen of the Church of *Rome*, but plainly to no purpoſe. For any one may ſee, that *Joſhua*'s keeping the Commandments, was only his doing thoſe things he was commanded to do, in order to eſtabliſh the *Iſraelites* in the Inheritance of the Land of *Canaan*. And we find the ſame *Joſhua* in another place aſſerting the impoſſibility of ſerving God, *Joſh.* 24. 19. at leaſt he did not believe Men could do more.

It may be objected, That the light of the Goſpel is much clearer than that of the Law, and the burthen eaſier to be born, *&c.* But for all that, 'tis certain the Goſpel requires as full and perfect Obedience as ever the Law did. Nay, it proceeds farther; for under the Law Men thought it no great Crime to murther their Neighbour in his good Name, ſo they let his Body alone: They alſo thought it no Sin to Luſt after a Woman, provided they did not come to Action. But under the Goſpel our Saviour tells us the contrary *Ye have heard, that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill; and whoſoever ſhall*

ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the Judgment. But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the Judgment; and whoſoever ſhall ſay unto his Brother, Racha, ſhall be in danger of the Council: but whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou Fool, ſhall be in danger of Hell Fire. Again, *Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery. But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever looketh on a Woman, to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his heart*, Matth. 5. 21, 22, 27, 28. So that we may ſee, though the Law was ſuch a *yoke as neither we nor our Fore-fathers were able to bear*, Act. 15. 10. yet the Yoke of the Goſpel is not ſo light as to be run away with. As eaſie as it is, 'tis very irkſom to Fleſh and Blood; yet 'tis what we muſt bear ſo long as we live, and then it is God's mere Mercy, if the heavier yoke of Everlaſting Miſery is not laid on us inſtead of it.

If Man has Free-will to do good as well as evil, yet, *I know that in me (that is, in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me.* (And on the contrary, *if I do that good I would, it is no more I that do it, but the grace of God that is in me*, 1 Cor. 15. 18.) *I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me. For I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man. But I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members*, ſays the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 7. 18. And he at laſt concludes, *So then with the mind I my ſelf ſerve the Law of God; but with the fleſh the law of ſin.* To which we may add

what the ſame Apoſtle ſays, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. *But the natural man* (that is, fleſh and blood) *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* And then certainly our Free-will can do us little good, towards making us do more than we ſhould, when by reaſon of the ſtubborneſs of our Fleſh, we can't do what we would. But the Apoſtle tells us, *That we are not able to do any thing of our ſelves, but 'tis God that worketh in us both to will and do after his good pleaſure*, Phil. 2. 13. And our Saviour himſelf ſays, *That no man can come unto him, unleſs the Father draw him*, Joh. 6. 44. Therefore I think it ſtrange that a Man ſhould be able to do more than he can: 'Tis a Contradiction. Certainly he that made us, can tell beſt what we can do: And he ſays, *That the heart of man is only evil continually*, Gen. 6. 5. & 8. 21. If then we are naturally more prone to do evil than good, how is it poſſible for us to be better than we ſhould be? And if under the Goſpel we muſt obſerve every Punctilio ſo ſtrictly, as not to be angry with our Neighbour, not to look on a Woman to luſt after her, *&c.* how are we able to do all that's required of us? The Apoſtle St. *James* goes a ſtep farther; *If ye fulfil the Royal Law, according to the Scripture, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf, ye do well: But if ye have reſpect to perſons, ye commit ſin, and are convinced of the Law as Tranſgreſſors*, Jam. 2. 9. To have reſpect to Perſons in civil Converſation, one would think a ſmall matter, to make one guilty of the breach of the Law; but ſo it is. And our Saviour goes farther yet, *Matth.* 5. 43. *Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I ſay unto you, Love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you,*

and

and pray for them which deſpightfully uſe you and perſecute you. This is a hard leſſon, and not agreeable to Fleſh and Blood; yet 'tis made the condition of becoming the Children of our Father which is in Heaven.

From what has been ſaid, we may gather, That if any Man can do what he is required to do, he cannot do more. And if, as we are told, *Jam.* 3. 2. *In many things we offend all.* And if a *juſt man falleth ſeven times a day*, Prov. 24. 16. Who can boaſt of being righteous over much? Nay, where is there a Man ſo good, as that he may *number his offences?* Holy *David* could not, though *a man after God's own heart.* We read of but one man, throughout the whole Book of God, who was *without ſin*, and that was the man *Chriſt Jeſus*; yet it was never ſaid of him, that he did more than fulfil the Will of his Father. And for us, born in ſin, and conceived in corruption, to ſay we can do more!— I cannot expreſs the Folly and Nonſenſe of it. By ſo doing, we ſhould make God our Debtor, who is Debtor to no Man. If they of the Church of *Rome* can brag of any works of Supererogation, they are ſuch as theſe; The hallowing Daggers for the cutting off Princes that are not for their turn: The ſacrificing all they pleaſe to call Hereticks: The denying the Scriptures in a tongue underſtood by the Vulgar: And ſeveral others which might be named, concerning which they may indeed be ask'd, Who hath required theſe things at your hands? But we of the Church of *England* know of nothing to be done, more than what is our duty to do. We know the Preachers Doctrin was, *Whatſoever thy hand findeth for thee to do, do it with thy might*, Eccl. 9. 10. And our Lord and Maſter's Advice is, *when we have done all we can*, to acknowledge our ſelves

but unprofitable Servants; having done only what *was our duty to do*, Luk. 17. 10. For no Man lives and sins not. *If therefore we say that we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us*, 1 Joh. 1. 8. Nay, we make God a Liar, who hath said, *there is not one that doth good*, Psal 14. 1, 3. In a word, if there is a Devil to tempt, we are still in danger of sinning. And if every thought will be brought in to Judgment, who can call himself Inncent? 'Tis my opinion, that instead of thinking we can do more than our Duty; Every Man should rather repent of the sins, as well of Omission, as Commission he is daily guilty of; and with the Psalmist cry out, *Who can understand his Errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults*, Psal. 19. 12. For our Saviour's censure on the most righteous, is, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*, Luk. 13. 3, 5. To conclude this first *Quere*; if it were possible for any Man to over-do his Duty, I would ask any reasonable Man, Whether, when he has done more than he ought to have done, he would not commit a great sin in thinking so, and a greater in saying so? If the Affirmative holds good, then the poor Man has still some part of his Duty to perform, *viz.* to repent of that sin; and so *in infinitum*.

II. The second Enquiry proposed, was, Whether a Man by his own Works can merit Heaven?

Here, Madam, be pleased to consider with me these few following Texts.

Deut. 9. 4.— *Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this Land; but for the wickedness of these nations,*

tions, &c.— The Land of *Canaan*, of which this Text ſpeaks, is generally looked on as a Type of Heaven: And then this is plain enough.

Job 9. 30.——*If I waſh my ſelf with ſnow-water, and make my hands never ſo clean; yet thou ſhalt plunge me in the ditch, and my own cloaths ſhall abhor me*, &c. And Chap. 15. 14.—*What is man, that he ſhould be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he ſhould be righteous?* Verſe 16. *How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?*— All ſpoken by one, whoſe Fellow was not to be found upon the Face of the Earth for Vertue; and therefore if any could boaſt, he might.

Pſal. 130. 3.——*If thou, Lord, ſhouldſt mark iniquities, O Lord, who ſhould ſtand? But there is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared.*——And *Pſal.* 143. 2.——*Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.*

Iſai. 53. 6.——*All we like ſheep have gone aſtray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.*——And Chap. 64. 6.—*But we are all as unclean things; and all our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags, and we do all fade as a leaf, and our iniquity like the wind hath taken us away.*

Rom. 3. 10.——*As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God; they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one. Their throat is an open ſepulchre, with their tongues they have uſed deceit, the poiſon of aſps is under their lips, whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs, their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood, deſtruction and miſery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes.*—All this is ſpoken of all Mankind in general, both Jews and Gentiles;

Gentiles; and if it be true, what can any Man find in himſelf to challenge Heaven as his due?

Rom. 6. 23.——Eternal Life is called, *The gift of God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*——Now if Eternal Life be a Gift, I would fain know how a Gift can be Merited? And if it be for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, I would know whether the ſame Gift can be ſaid to be Merited by him for us, and by us for our ſelves too? if this is affirmed, then ſomething to this purpoſe muſt follow, That the Paſſion and Death of Chriſt are Significant, and partly not, becauſe a Man, as a Chriſtian at leaſt, may Merit, and conſequently enjoy Heaven, by his own Works, without the Application of Chriſts Merits; which would be very Abſurd, to ſay no worſe of it: But if it be denyed, then the Conſequence will be this, That let a Man merit what he will, he muſt be beholding to the Merits of Chriſt for his Admiſſion into Heaven, at laſt.

2 *Cor.* 4. 4.——*For I know nothing by my ſelf, yet am I not hereby juſtified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.*—— Let us then ſuppoſe a Man to be in the Apoſtles Caſe, in my Opinion ſuch a Man could have but little Comfort from his own Merits, if he being ſo perfect as not to know any evil by himſelf, ſhould not for all that be certain of his Juſtification. I would ask one of theſe Meritorious Gentlemen, in the Words of the Apoſtle, at the ſeventh Verſe of the ſame Chapter; *Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive? now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory as if thou hadſt not received it?*

Eph. 2. 8.——*For by grace ye are ſaved, through Faith; and that not of your ſelves, it is the gift of* God; *not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt.*

2 *Tim.* 1. 9.---*Who hath ſaved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace; which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began.*

Tit. 3. 5.----*Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us*, &c. And many more you will meet with in reading; but by theſe few you may judge how available our works, even the very beſt we can do, are to ſalvation.

Before I leave this Point, I preſume it will not be impertinent, if I add ſomething, in this Place, touching Juſtification by Faith: In which, for brevity ſake, I ſhall do little more than ſet down the moſt pertinent Texts of Scripture, and leave the reſt to your Ingenuity. And in the firſt place,

Gen. 15. 6.——*Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteouſneſs.*

Habak. 2. 4.——*Behold, his ſoul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the juſt ſhall live by his Faith.*

Joh. 1. 12.—*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* And Chap. 3. 16. *For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten ſon, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.*——

When our Saviour went to raiſe the Ruler of the Synagogue's Daughter, he bid him, *only believe*, Mark, 5. 36.

Acts 10. 23.——*To him give all the Prophets witneſs. That through his name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.* And Chap. 16. 31. When the Keeper of the Priſon, wherein *Paul* and *Silas* were, asked them, *What he ſhould do to be ſaved*, their Anſwer was, *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy houſe.*

Rom.

Rom. 3. 23.—*For we have all ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God, being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt; whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I ſay, at this time his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus. Where is boaſting then? it is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of Faith; therefore we conclude, that a man is juſtified by faith, without the deeds of the law.*—If you conſider this Quotation throughly, you will find it as compleat to the purpoſe, as can be deſired. However, I'll preſent you with a few more.

Rom. 4. 1.—*What ſhall we ſay then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the fleſh, hath found? no, for if Abraham were juſtified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God; for what ſay the Scriptures? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteouſneſs: And to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs.*——Where, by the way, the Word (*ungodly*) in this Text, muſt not be taken to mean Impenitent Sinners, for they, as ſuch, can have no Right to Juſtification; but as no man is Upright in the Sight of God, he is ſaid, in the Beſt of Men, *to juſtifie ungodly, freely by his grace*, in the foregoing Chapter, Verſe 23, 24. So that this makes doubly for my Purpoſe, ſhewing, firſt, That Juſtification comes by Faith; and alſo, That thoſe that are Juſtified, being Sinners before God, cannot with Reaſon boaſt of the Merit of Works.

Rom. 5. 1.—*Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And Chap. 10. 8. *The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart;*

heart; that is the word of faith which we preach, That if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.

Gal. 2. 16. 21.—*Knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified. I do not fruſtrate the grace of God; for if righteouſneſs come by the law, then Chriſt is dead in vain.* And Chap. 3. 11.——And the Scripture foreſeeing that God would Juſtifie the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Goſpel unto *Abraham*, ſaying, *In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed. But that no man is juſtified by the law in the ſight of God, it is evident, for the juſt ſhall live by faith: For in Jeſus Chriſt neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion availeth any thing, but faith which worketh by love.*——Let that Text. *Eph.* 2. 8. above cited, ſumm up all; *For by grace ye are ſaved, through faith; and that not of your ſelves, it is the gift of God, not of works leſt any man ſhould boaſt.* Neither have I been at all this Pains, from a ſolifidian Principle, to endeavour to ſeclude Good Works from being the Fruits of a lively Faith: For ſo I ſhould fruſtrate the Grace of God. And I preſume, Madam, you know my Opinion better than to think ſo; my Intent was only to ſhew, How Erronious it is to ſuppoſe Merit from Works, eſpecially according to the Doctrin of the Church of *Rome*, That Men may Merit for themſelves and others. To conclude this Point, give me leave to preſent to your Meditation the Heinouſneſs of Original Sin only, and then I'll leave you to Judge, if, for all that, and the many Actual Sins we daily commit, God will be gracious to us, and receive us unto his Glory, how little Reaſon we

have to boaſt of that *Nothing* we have done to Merit his Favour.

Gen. 6. 5.——*And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart: And the Lord ſaid, I will deſtroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beaſt, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*——I think no man can deny Original Sin to be the Cauſe of all this; and then, how Heinous a thing that is, which is the Cauſe of ſo much Diſpleaſure in God, I ſubmit to any perſon to Judge. You will read to the ſame Purpoſe, Verſe 11, 12, 13.

Job 14. 4.—*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* For, *Pſal.* 51. 5. *Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me. Prov.* 20. 9. *Who then can ſay, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my ſin? Eccl.* 7. 29. *For lo, this only have I found, That God made man upright* at firſt, but ſince they have fallen away from that Upright State, they *have ſought out many Inventions.*

Jer. 17. 9.—*The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it?* For, *Matth.* 15. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murthers, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe-witneſs, blaſphemies, and all things that defile a man.* And the Reaſon of all this is, Becauſe, *Joh.* 3. 6. *That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh.* Man, as he is Fleſh and Blood, is naturally fleſhly minded. *Rom.* 7. 14. *For we know that the law is ſpiritual, but I am carnal, ſold under ſin; for that which I do, I allow not, for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that I do.* And ſo, *Eph.* 2. 3. *All are by nature the children of wrath.*

Jam.

Jam. 1. 15.— *Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin; and when 'tis finiſhed, bringeth forth death.*—— Our firſt Parents luſted after the forbidden Fruit, and that brought forth the ſin of breaking the Commandment; and that ſin brought forth Death. And *Rom.* 5. 12. *As by one man ſin entred into the world, and death by ſin; ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all, in him, have ſinned.*——Wherefore if all are guilty of Original Sin, and that guilt makes us Children of Wrath, and conſequently Heirs of Damnation, I don't ſee any reaſon we have to boaſt of our righteouſneſs, but rather we have too much cauſe to bewail our wretchedneſs, and to pray continually againſt the inevitable miſery we are liable to undergo, for all the good works we have done, or can do, unleſs God be more merciful to the beſt of us, than we deſerve.

And though by Baptiſm the guilt of Original Sin is waſhed away; yet 'tis more than probable, that the firſt Actual Sin brings it again. For, as he that by amendment of life turns to God, his former ſins ſhall not be remembred; ſo, he that returns from the Service of God, his righteouſneſs ſhall be blotted out and forgotten, and all his former iniquities ſhall teſtifie againſt him. To conclude; from what has been produc'd, this at preſent occurs to our Obſervation; That though there is no ſuch thing in truth, as a Solifidian Juſtice, but every Man that will be ſaved, muſt be endued with a Faith that works by Love; yet, after all we can do, we muſt expect Salvation by Faith in Chriſt's Blood, and not from our own worthineſs.

III. The Third Enquiry propos'd, was, To whom it belongs to Forgive Sins?

Pſal. 3. 8.—— *Salvation belongeth to the Lord.*—— 49. 7.—*None of them can by any means redeem his brother,*

nor give to God a ranſom for him. For the redemption of their ſoul is precious.—— And 37. 39. *The ſalvation of the righteous is of the Lord.* Therefore, 130. 7. *Let Iſrael hope in the Lord.*—— It was the Pſalmiſts opinion, That it belonged to God to Forgive Sins, and therefore, *Pſal.* 51. 14. he thus addreſſes himſelf to him; *Deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God, thou God of my ſalvation.* And thus God affirms of Himſelf, *Iſai.* 43. 11. *I, even I am the Lord; and beſide me there is no Saviour. I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.* where we may take notice, That it belongs to God to Forgive Sins; and alſo, That he Forgives them for his own ſake, which takes off all Merit by Works.

Dan. 9. 9.—*To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveneſſes.*—— It was the conſtant Opinion of the Jews: For when our Saviour ſaid to the Sick of the Palſie, *Man, thy ſins are forgiven thee*; the Jews, not believing him to be God as well as Man, accus'd him of Blaſphemy, ſaying, *Who can forgive ſins but God only?* Luk. 5. 21. So our Lord himſelf, though *John Baptiſt* call'd him *the Lamb of God which takes away the ſins of the world*, Joh. 1. 29. directs us to ask God to *forgive our ſins*, Mat. 6. 12. For at *Verſ.* 14. *'Tis our heavenly Father that muſt forgive us.* And thus the Apoſtle tells the *Coloſſians*, That *they being dead in their ſins, and the uncircumciſion of their fleſh, God had quickened them, and forgiven them all treſpaſſes*, Col. 2. 13. From all which it appears plainly enough, That Forgiveneſs of Sin, belongs only to God.

The conſequence of this, is, That if it belongs to God only to Forgive Sins, then Confeſſion of Sins is due to him alone.

A Member of the Church of *Rome*, is in danger of paſſing immediately into Hell, if he dies without having confeſs'd

confeſs'd his Sins to a Prieſt: So abſolutely neceſſary do they teach Auricular Confeſſion to be in order to Salvation. But, if we may examin it a little, I am apt to think, it will appear much like the reſt.

Pſal. 32. 5.—*I acknowledged my ſins unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid: I ſaid I will confeſs my tranſgreſſions unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin.*—— The Pſalmiſt was abſolv'd without Auricular Confeſſion, only by acknowledging his Sins to God.

1 *King.* 8. 47.—*Yet if they ſhall bethink themſelves in the Land whether they were carried Captives, and repent and make ſupplication to thee in the Land of them that carried them Captives, ſaying, We have ſinned, and have done perverſely, we have committed wickedneſs*, &c.—— Here is no Confeſſion to a Prieſt mentioned.

Ezra 9. 5.—*And at the evening ſacrifice, I roſe up from my heavineſs, and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and ſpread out my hands unto the Lord my God, and ſaid, O my God, I am aſhamed, and bluſh to lift up my face to thee, my God*, &c.

Pſal. 41. 4.—*I ſaid, Lord be merciful unto me, and heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee.* Hence Confeſſion of Sin is due to him againſt whom we have ſinned. And then 'tis due Relatively to our Neighbour, if we have done him any injury: But Properly to God, according to the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 51. 4. *Againſt thee only have I ſinned*, &c. when he had committed Adultery with *Bathſheba*, and cauſed her Husband to be ſlain.

Dan. 9. 15.—— *And now, O Lord our God, that haſt brought thy people forth out of the Land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and haſt gotten the renown, as at this day; we have ſinned, we have done wickedly.* Therefore, *Jer.* 14. 20. *We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedneſs, and the iniquity of our Fathers; for we have ſinned againſt thee.*—— In a word; I ſhould never have done, if I ſhould quote

all

all the Texts to prove Confeſſion of Sins only due to God. And therefore, becauſe you will meet with them in reading, I ſhall at preſent only refer you to the Sixth Chapter of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, to what our Saviour ſays there of Prayer and Faſting: For Repentance and Confeſſion being inherent parts of Prayer and Faſting, I think they may be included in the ſame Advice; which I need not have inſerted, by reaſon of your frequent uſing the *Lords Prayer*, in which 'tis evident.

After all, there is not one Text, as I know of, that by any good Conſequence, makes Confeſſion to a Prieſt ſo abſolutely Neceſſary, as the Doctrin of the Church of *Rome* does: If any will do it, and do it ſincerely, we do not deny it to be Good. But after 'tis done, without a Private Confeſſion to God, it muſt needs be Imperfect; for it is God that knows our Hearts better than we do our ſelves, and we are guilty of many Sins we know not of, as the Pſalmiſt profeſſes: Wherefore we ſhould cry out with him, *Pſal.* 19. 12. *Who can underſtand his errors? cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults.* The conſequence of all is, That all Men ought to Confeſs their Sins to God, againſt whom only they have ſinned, as to one that has the ſole Power to forgive them. Not that I deſire, in the leaſt, to diminiſh the Power of the Keys given to the Church; for I own, That our Bleſſed Lord gave Power and Authority to his Miniſters, to declare and pronounce to his People, being Penitent, the Abſolution and Remiſſion of their Sins, in his Name: But, to confine that Power to the Church of *Rome* only; and to ſay, All that Die out of her Communion are certainly Damn'd for want of it, and to make the Biſhop of *Rome* joynt-Competitor with Chriſt in the Buſineſs, is againſt the Grain, and will not digeſt in my Stomach, whatever it may do in other Mens.

I ſhould

I ſhould waſt too much Time and Paper, If I ſhould examine the Groſs Nonſenſical Conſequences of Believing the Biſhop of *Rome* able to Forgive Sins, which have from thence been impoſed upon the greater part of the Church of *Rome*, the Ignorant ſort of People. That the Pope can at once Forgive a Man all the Sins he ever has committed, or ever ſhall be guilty of; that he can thruſt a Man into Heaven, for as long a Time as he pleaſes, where he ſhall lie undiſcovered by the all-ſeeing Eye of God, and at the end of that Term be kicked into Hell; that he can forgive the Sins of all that are in the Communion of the *Roman* Church, of all Chriſtians, nay, if he pleaſes, of the whole World at once. It has been acknowledged by many of their own Writers on this Subject, who have been guilty of the leaſt Extravagance, That the Pope has Power, if he will, at one Maſs, to free all the Souls out of Purgatory. If this were true, King *James* the Firſt's Inference on the Poſition, was, with Abnegation of the Popes Charity, and Admiration of his unparallel'd Cruelty, That, being granted to have a Power ſo to do, he does not apply his Will to it. But I know, Madam, you are no Friend to ſuch Fancies; therefore I ſhall appeal no further than to your own Ingenuity, to judge from what has been produced, Who has the Supreme and only Power to forgive Sins, to whom Confeſſion properly is due, and in whoſe Name only Abſolution ought to be Pronounced. And ſo proceed.

IV. The Fourth Enquiry propoſed, was, Whether the Scriptures warrant the Worſhiping of Images, or Praying to Saints and Angels?

The Second Commandment is ſo much to our Purpoſe, that they of the Church of *Rome* have prudently left it out of the Decalogue, and to make up the number, they cut

cut the Tenth into two Parts; ſo the Church of *Rome*'s Decalogue is this,

I. *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me.*
II. *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*, &c.
III. *Remember that thou keepeſt holy the Sabbath-day*, &c.
IV. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, &c.
V. *Thou ſhalt do no Murther.*
VI. *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.*
VII. *Thou ſhalt not Steal.*
VIII. *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs againſt thy Neighbour.*
IX. *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbours Wife.*
X. *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbours Houſe*, &c.

So that the generality of the People of the Church of *Rome* know of no ſuch thing in Being, as the tedious Harangue againſt Images, by us called the Second Commandment. However, there are Texts enough beſides, both in the Old and New Teſtaments, clearly againſt them; of which I will only give you a few of the chief.

Judges 13. 15——*And Manoah ſaid unto the Angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we ſhall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the Lord ſaid unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a Burnt-offering, thou muſt offer it unto the Lord. And Manoah ſaid unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy ſayings come to paſs, we may do thee honour? And the angel of the Lord ſaid unto him, Why askeſt thou after my name, ſeeing it is ſecret?*——The Angel would not tell his Name, becauſe *Manoah* ſhould honour God only.

Pſalm

Pſal. 29. 2.——*Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his Name; worſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs.* For *Iſai.* 42.8, *I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another; neither my praiſe to graven Images.*—— And I am certain there is not one Text to the contrary; but many to the ſame purpoſe.

Acts 10. 25.——*And as* Peter *was coming in*, Cornelius *met him, and fell down at his feet and worſhipped him. But* Peter *took him up, ſaying, Stand up, I my ſelf alſo am a man.* And *Chap.* 14. *Verſ.* 11.—*When the People ſaw what* Paul *had done, they lift up their voices, ſaying, in the ſpeech of* Lycaonia, *The Gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of Men. And they called* Barnabas, Jupiter; *and* Paul, Mercurius; *becauſe he was the chief Speaker. Then the Prieſt of* Jupiter, *which was before their City, brought Oxen and Garlands unto the Gates, and wou'd have done Sacrifice with the People. Which when the Apoſtles,* Barnabas *and* Paul, *heard of, they rent their Clothes, and ran in among the People, crying out, and ſaying, Sirs, why do ye theſe things? we alſo are men of like Paſſions with you,* &c. —I am apt to believe theſe things were done and ſuffer'd by the Providence of God, on purpoſe to ſhew, that as they were not to be worſhipp'd while they were on the Earth, ſo neither ſhou'd we pay Divine Honours to 'em now they are in Heaven. But the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians* is very expreſs to the purpoſe.

1 Cor. 1. 13.—*Is Chriſt divided? was* Paul *crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of* Paul? *Chap.* 3. 4.—*Who then is* Paul? *and who is* Apollos, *but Miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted,* Apollos *watered; but God gave the increaſe.* So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but *God that giveth the increaſe.*—Now Judge, Madam, what a horrid thing it muſt needs be to make Images and Pictures of the Saints whereby to Worſhip 'em, if it was ſo great a Crime to eſteem one of 'em before another while they were on Earth. But as we are not to Wor-

ſhip the Saints, ſo neither muſt we pay ſuch honour to Angels.

Col. 2. 18.---*Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of Angels*, &c.

Rev. 19. 10. & 22. 9.---*And I fell at his feet and worſhipped him, and he ſaid unto me, ſee thou do it not: I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy Brethren that have the Teſtimony of Jeſus: Worſhip God*, &c.---And certainly, if we muſt not Worſhip an Angel if we ſhou'd ſee him, I know not which way it can be prov'd lawful to intrude into thoſe things which we have not ſeen, as the Apoſtle ſays of them that Worſhip Angels, *Col.* 2. 18. I can find no Text of Scripture for it; but you ſee, Madam, how many I have produc'd againſt it. And I believe we ſhall ſee as little reaſon to pray to Saints and Angels, as to worſhip 'em.

Iſai. 63. 16.---*Doubtleſs thou art our Father, tho'* Abraham *be ignorant of us, and tho'* Iſrael *acknowledge us not; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy Name is from Everlaſting.*---Where be pleas'd to obſerve, that, if it was lawful to pray to, and in ſo doing to worſhip Saints departed, why might not the *Iſraelites* have made them Images of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, and pray'd to them to help 'em in time of trouble; or, to put the beſt face upon it, that they wou'd pray to God for their own Offspring on Earth, as well as they of the Church of *Rome* have their Repreſentatives of, and Prayers to their Saints; who for the moſt part, we are apt to believe, are only titular ones? They knew this wou'd be to no purpoſe, for *Abraham* was ignorant of 'em, and *Iſrael* acknowledged them not. But,

Jer. 15. 1.---*Then ſaid the Lord unto me, Tho'* Moſes *and* Samuel *ſtood before me, yet, my mind cou'd not be toward this People.*---That is, If it was poſſible for *Moſes* and *Samuel*, whoſe Prayers were ſo prevalent with me when they liv'd on Earth, to intercede for this People now, yet my Mind cou'd not be toward them. Thus then appears the Vanity of invocating Saints departed, in that *the Dead know nothing neither*

neither have they any more a portion for ever of any thing that is done under the Sun, Eccl. 9. 5, 6. But whether Angels and Saints departed, are acquainted with our Condition, or can hear our Prayers, is not much to the purpose; 'tis enough to tell you, that, supposing they are endued with such Faculties, our Worshipping them wou'd detract from the Honour of God, which he has said he will not give to another: and our invocating them wou'd make them Mediators and Intercessors, when the Apostle plainly affirms, That *there is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. 2. 5.

To conclude this, because I wou'd be as brief as possibly I may, I shall refer you to the Fourth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, where you'll find, the great Reason that *Moses* gives the Children of *Israel*, why they shou'd not make 'em Images, is, because when they heard the Voice of the Lord from the Mountain, they saw no Similitude; which he urges more than once. And then, what Grounds can they of the Church of *Rome* pretend, for exposing a Picture of him, who always was Invisible? This has been lately acknowledg'd to be Idolatry, by one that writ more for the Church of *Rome* in this particular, than, as he said afterwards, he intended, tho' all little enough to the purpose: or at least more was added, by some-body else, to what he did; as may be conjectur'd from the variation of the Style: but no matter which. "The Author makes Idolatry of two Sorts; "The first whereof is, the Worshipping any Image or Sym- "bols of false Gods, as the Supreme Deities: and says, If "they do not this, then they are innocent of the worst part "of Idolatry. The second is, the making, or, as he says, "the attempting to make a Similitude of the true God, or "uncreated Divine Nature. That, says he, is the other "part of Idolatry, and the Scripture knows no more; there- "fore however Superstitious they may be in their use of "Images, yet they cannot be guilty of Idolatry, but upon "one of these two accounts, (I suppose he means, the bare

Reasons for abrogating the Test, p. 128.

"uſe of Images in the Worſhip of God was none, becauſe he "ſays, *p.* 124, that God was ſo far from forbidding the uſe "of Images in his Worſhip, that he wou'd not be Worſhipp'd "without them.) And he ſays, that no Man was ever ſo hardy "as to charge either of theſe two Kinds of Idolatry upon that "Church. But, not to enquire whether their Worſhipping
P. 126. God by an Image, which he ſeems to Vindicate in another place, be the making a Similitude of the true God, or uncreated Divine Nature; I aſſure you, Madam, I have ſeen the Ancient of Days pictur'd like an Old Man, with a great Beard, by which they repreſented the Unity of the Godhead: And in another place, the Trinity of Perſons, ſtanding on a row in a Sheet held up by two Angels; two of the three, *viz.* The Father and the Holy Ghoſt, with their Backs toward me, to expreſs their Inviſibility, tho' in the other Picture I had ſeen God face to face; and the Son in the middle, as the ſecond Perſons place, with his face viſible. Now in my opinion, one or both of theſe Repreſentations muſt be Idolatry by their own confeſſion. But the preſent Circumſtances of the *Roman* Church are ſuch, that if they can't make People believe they Practiſe no ſuch things as theſe, they'll do little good on thoſe of the Church of *England*: and 'tis to be hoped they'll get but little ground that way, while there are any left to diſcover their Forgeries.

No more Authority have they for invocating Saints and Angels, than for Worſhipping Images. The only Preſident, as I know of, in the Primitive Times, was the voluntary Humility of the *Gnoſticks*, condemn'd by St. *Paul* himſelf, *Col.* 2. But for theſe they muſt have recourſe to the Revelations made to doating Women, and the Viſions of mad *Franciſcans*, and I know not whom——That *Raphael* ſhou'd be invocated on a Journey, and againſt Diſeaſes in general; but in particular, *Apollonia* againſt the Tooth-ach; *Sebaſtian* and *Roch*, againſt the Plague; St. *Nicholas*, againſt Tempeſts; *Michael* and St. *George*, againſt Enemies. From whom, if
Serrar. *Lit.* 2. *q.* 32. they be invocated particularly, ſay they, Experience and

Tradition have discover'd special help in these Cases. But what is this, but the ancient Heathen Idolatry, reviv'd in the Church of *Rome*? Which is so much the worse there, because of the Profession of Christianity; and Men that pretend to know the true God, blasphemously imagin, or assert against their Consciences, which I think the worse of the two, That help to come from the Creature, which can only come from the Creator. May not we on better Grounds deify our Physicians? But these things they'll venture to deny, tho' they are easily prov'd: that which they chiefly acknowledge in this Point, is their praying to Saints and Angels to pray for them, or as some say, to pray to Christ to interceed for them, it being arrogant Presumption, for Mortals to go to Christ immediately. But this is downright *Gnosticism*; and we of the Church of *England*, have our Saviour's own words for our Encouragement, if they of the Church of *Rome* have not, *Joh.* 14. 6, *I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me.* And we know of no other Intercessor in Heaven, but Christ. Therefore I think it a privation of our Christian Liberty, to debar us from Praying to him immediately, on Pretence of too much Presumption in so doing; for he himself invites all that labour and are heavy laden, to come to him, and he will give 'em rest, *Matth.* 11. 28. He does not say, *Come to me* by my Mother, or by St. *Michael*, or St. *Bennet*, &c. But, *Come to me*——directly.

5. The Fifth Enquiry must be, *Whether there is any such Place as Purgatory?*

The Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, as they have been manag'd, are most of 'em so order'd, as to be as suitable and conformable to the temper of Humane Nature as they well may be: as might be made appear, if we had time, in these already spoken to. But above all, the Doctrine of Purgatory, is as obliging and complaisant to Flesh and Blood, as any thing can be. For this takes off all necessity of a strict and restrain'd life; here needs no mortifying our Members

which

which are upon the Earth, as the Apoſtle's advice was: Men need not be ſo fearful of pleaſing their Appetites, as they ſhould be, if they were to follow the rigid Precepts of our Saviour, or St. *Paul*. But the *Epicuræan* Principle will make a Man happy here, in gratifying the Luſts of the Fleſh; and hereafter he ſhall be happy in Heaven too, if he has but been ſo frugal as to ſave a little Money to pay for a Catholick Burial, only undergoing a little Frixation or Roaſting by the way. That this is the genuine Explication of the Doctrine of Purgatory, as it is receiv'd and propagated in the *Roman* Church, might be made appear by many good Conſequences, if I had time, and it was worth the Pains to conſider every Particular. But 'tis done at large already by an Excellent Hand; and the Buſineſs of the preſent Undertaking, is not ſo much to that, as to Enquire whether there is any ſuch Place as Purgatory or no?

Dr. Stil. *Idol. of the Church of* Rome.

There are but two Texts in the New Teſtament that can with any colour be urg'd to this purpoſe. One is, 1 *Pet.* 3. 19. where 'tis ſaid, that Chriſt *went and Preach'd to the Spirits in Priſon*. And the other, 1 *Cor.* 3. 15, *If any mans works ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer loſs: but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo, as by fire.* On theſe two Texts this Doctrine is built. If therefore I can make it plain, that neither of theſe Texts are to the purpoſe, I think I ſhall have little more to do than to deny the Doctrine to be true; foraſmuch as in any Matter of Diſpute the Affirmative ought to be prov'd before the Negative. I begin then with the firſt, 1 *Pet.* 3. 19.

In the foregoing Verſe, the Apoſtle tells us, that Chriſt hath once ſuffer'd for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the fleſh, but quicken'd by the ſpirit. And then adds, By which alſo he went and preach'd to the ſpirits in Priſon. From whence moſt Expoſitors gather, that what our Saviour is ſaid to do here, he did after his Reſurrection: As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, He was put to Death in the Fleſh, but

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was quicken'd, or rais'd again by the Spirit; and after that, he went by the ſame Spirit, or Power, that quicken'd him, and Preach'd to the Spirits in Priſon. And that the word Priſon, here, can't mean Purgatory, will more plainly appear, if we follow the Apoſtle as he goes on. —— *By which alſo he went and Preach'd to the Spirits in Priſon; which ſometime were Diſobedient, when once the long ſuffering of God waited in the Days of* Noah, *while the Ark was preparing: wherein few, that is, Eight Perſons were ſaved by Water.* The like Figure whereunto, even Baptiſm doth alſo now ſave us, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, &c. We read, *Gen.* 6. 3. that God ſaid, *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man, for that he alſo is Fleſh: yet his Days ſhall be an Hundred and Twenty Years.* The Deluge was determin'd for the Sins of the Old World; yet God of his Mercy wou'd give 'em ſo long time as One Hundred and Twenty Years to Repent in; and ſent *Noah* to Preach Repentance, and Threaten Deſtruction to all that wou'd not amend their Lives. Whence this of the Apoſtle has been interpreted of Chriſt's Preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, by his Apoſtles, after his Reſurrection when he had ſent his Spirit among 'em. And ſo, thoſe that wou'd not repent at the Preaching of the Goſpel, ſhou'd one Day periſh by Fire, as they of the Old World did by Water, for not Repenting at the Preaching of *Noah*: For as Chriſt was then reveal'd in a flood of Water, ſo he will again be revealed in flaming Fire to take Vengeance on them that obey not his Goſpel. But they that wou'd repent, and be obedient to his Goſpel, ſhou'd be ſaved by Baptiſm, as *Noah* was in the Ark: yet not merely from a Temporal Puniſhment, but from Everlaſting Deſtruction. Now, to make the Priſon here ſpoken of, Purgatory; is to ſay, in effect, that thoſe that were deſtroy'd by the Deluge of the Old World, have remain'd ever ſince in this Purgatory till our Saviour's Crucifixion, and that in one of the Three Days in which he lay in the

Grave,

Grave, he went and Preach'd the Gospel of Repentance to them. But this can't be made deducible from the words of the Apostle, but rather the contrary. For, the word φυλακὴ which we render, Prison; signifies any kind of Receptacle whatever, a Sheath for a Sword, as well as a Gaol for Prisoners, and as properly the Body of a Man, wherein the Soul is kept, as any thing else: any thing containing, is φυλακὴ, a Prison, in reference to the thing contain'd. So that Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison, here, is nothing else, but either the Preaching of *Noah* to those of the Old World, or of his Apostles to the *Gentiles* of the New, whose Souls were penn'd up in their Bodies, which were exercis'd in Filthy Lusts, as useless as a Sword is while it remains in the Sheath. And this is the sence that the best Expositors put upon the place. *Beza* especially, is very copious, and fully discusses the point, proving that this Prison can in no wise be taken for Purgatory. But the Reverend Dr. *Hammond* has most ingenuously and accurately expres'd the Apostles meaning; and therefore with his words I shall conclude, —— "Christ, says he, is an Example of suffer-
"ing for well-doing, in his Dying for Sins, not his own but
"ours, he being righteous died for us who were unrighte-
"ous, (that when we were Aliens and Enemies to God, he
"might reconcile us to him, and give us Authority to ap-
"proach him,) wherein yet for our example and comfort
"it must be observ'd, that tho' as a Man cloath'd in our
"Flesh, he was put to Death, and that innocently, to pur-
"chase Redemption for us, yet by the power of God in
"him he was most gloriously rais'd from the Dead, and
"shall consequently, by raising and rescuing us out of the
"present Sufferings, and destroying all obdurate Sinners,
"shew forth wonderful Evidences of Power and Life: The
"very same in effect that of old he did at the time in which,
"beyond all others, he shew'd himself in Power and Ma-
"jesty against his Enemies, but withal in great Mercy and
"Deliverance to his Obedient Servants that adher'd to
"him:

" him: I mean in the Days of the Old World, when by " *Noah*, that Preacher of Righteouſneſs, he gave thoſe treat- " able warnings to thoſe that made no uſe of the Light of " Nature in their Hearts, to the Spirits or Souls of thoſe " that were then alive before the Flood, which God had gi- " ven them with impreſſions of Good and Evil, but through " their cuſtoms of Sin were as a Sword put up in a Sheath, " laid up in their Bodies unprofitably.——So then, upon the whole matter, whether the ſence of the Apoſtle be referr'd to our Saviours Preaching, by *Noah*, to them of the Old World, or by his Apoſtles to the *Gentiles* of the New, is not much to the purpoſe; this is the plain reſolution of the preſent Quere, That the word *Priſon* here made uſe of, is only a Metaphorical Epithet given to the Body in reference to the Soul, a Compariſon made of the Soul confin'd in the Body of a ſinful Man, with a Man lock'd up in a Priſon, And thus when our Saviour, by his Miniſters, Preaches the Goſpel, eſpecially to Unbelievers or Wicked Men, he may be ſaid to Preach to Spirits in Priſon. From what has been ſaid then, I think Purgatory can't be aſſerted from the words of St. *Peter*.

Whence we come to conſider thoſe of St. *Paul*, *If any Man's Work ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer loſs, but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo, as by Fire.*

The Apoſtle, *Verſe* 10, ſays, *According to the Grace of God which was given to me, as a wiſe Maſter-Builder I have laid the Foundation, and another buildeth thereon*: And, *Verſe* 12. he ſpeaks of Two ſorts of Men that build on this Foundation; Firſt, *thoſe that build thereon Gold, Silver and Precious-Stones*: and Secondly, *thoſe that build thereon Wood, Hay and Stubble. Now*, ſays he, *Verſe* 13, *Every Man's Work ſhall be made manifeſt. For the Day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be reveal'd by Fire, and the Fire ſhall try every Man's Work, of what ſort it is. And*, as he goes on, *If any Man's Work ſhall abide which he hath built thereon, he ſhall receive a Reward. But if any Man's Work*

ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer loſs, &c. Which may be thus explain'd.

There were among the *Corinthians,* when the Apoſtle writ this Epiſtle to 'em, two ſorts of Preachers; ſome who endeavour'd nothing more, than to Preach the pure ſimplicity of the Goſpel, and to feed the Flock of Chriſt with ſound and wholſome Doctrine: And others, who pretended to greater parts and knowledge than other Men; and theſe with ſuperfluous flouriſhes and empty gloſſes endeavour'd to win the Hearts of their Hearers by their worldly wiſdom, as the Apoſtle calls it. As the other ſtudied for the preſervation of a good Conſcience in the faithful diſcharge of their Duty, ſo theſe made it their chief care to become the Peoples Favourites, by being as complaiſant and obliging as they cou'd, and by Indulging 'em in ſome petty matters, as they call'd 'em, that the Goſpel might not ſeem too heavy a burden to 'em. They wou'd tell the People of Works of Supererogation, ſome things they might do more than they were commanded to do; and ſo brought in worſhipping of Angels under a pretence of voluntary Humility, intruding into thoſe things which they had not ſeen, being vainly puffed up with their fleſhly minds, as the Apoſtle teſtifies, *Col.* 2. 18. And by ſuch little tricks as theſe they gain'd more and more upon the giddy Affections of the multitude, 'till at laſt they broke out into that Diviſion which call'd for this Epiſtle. Things being at this paſs, the Apoſtle thought it high time to think of a way, if poſſible, to put a ſtop to thoſe Enormities which were ſo faſt breaking into the Church. And to this end, he firſt mildly reproves the *Corinthians,* for their overmuch curioſity, and affection of Speculation, rather than wholſome Doctrine. And then he proceeds to ſhew 'em the vanity of ſuch Speculative Preachers, by telling 'em, that he had laid the Foundation, and that no Man cou'd lay another than what was laid already, which was Jeſus Chriſt. Now, ſays he, *If any Man builds upon*

this Foundation, Gold, Silver, Precious-Stones, Wood, Hay, or Stubble? Every Man's Work shall be made manifest. For the Day shall declare it, because it shall be reveal'd by Fire, and the Fire shall try every Man's Work, of what sort it is. And if any Man's Work shall abide, which he hath built upon that Foundation which he had laid, he shall receive a Reward. That is, He that shall approve himself a sincere Preacher of the Gospel, that he has fed the Flock of Christ with sound and profitable Doctrine, he shall in the Day of Trial have this to comfort him against all Temporal Calamities, That he has Acted as a faithful Pastor ought to do, and therefore though Tribulations beset him on all sides, yet he is certain he whom he has serv'd is faithful, and will undoubtedly perform his promise to his faithful Servants, so that in the midst of the greatest Afflictions he's sure to become more than a Conqueror, and as such shall not miss of a most glorious Reward. But, *If any Man's Work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss:* That is, He shall in the Day of Trial be convinc'd of the invalidity and unprofitableness of his Preaching, which will cause in him the pains of a guilty Conscience, which commonly attend on those that have been unprofitable in their Stations; and the loss of his former credit, will cause him shame, and a detestation of those vain and empty Opinions, which before he so earnestly defended; and all these together will put him in danger of losing his reward hereafter. Yet notwithstanding all this, tho' his fleshy opinions are consum'd and brought to nothing, if he has been so fortunate as to hold to the Foundation in the main Doctrines of Christianity, he himself may be saved, but 'twill be so hardly, as by Fire. That is, tho' he had been infected with *Gnosticism*, if he did not proceed so far as actually to deny Christ the Foundation, as his Doctrine before was that he might in case of Persecution, yet his not denying him at last, is an Abnegation of that Doctrine as Erroneous, and on that account he might be saved, notwithstanding the unprofitableness of his Preaching otherwise

ſimply conſider'd, but it wou'd be ſo hardly, as when one with the greateſt difficulty frees himſelf from the fury of a devouring Fire. I ſuppoſe the Apoſtles meaning may be to this purpoſe; that That Preacher who takes more delight in diſcuſſing Points of Controverſy, and the nice Speculations of School-Diſputes, than in Preaching the Goſpel ſo as it may beſt edify the generality of People that come to hear him; If to this he adds ſome ſuperfluous Doctrines of his own, provided they be not Heretical, but he ſtill holds the Foundation, yet all this may not damn him, if he does not at laſt deny Chriſt, but tho' his Works in the day of Trial ſhall prove but empty Chimera's, the vain Fancies of his own Brain, Wood and Stubble built upon the Foundation of the Goſpel, and as ſuch ſhall inſtantly be conſumed, yet he himſelf may eſcape the deſerved Puniſhment of an Unprofitable Preacher, but 'twill be, as a man whoſe Houſe is on fire round about him, and all his Subſtance being burnt, he himſelf with great hazard of his Life eſcapes the Flames. For 'tis not to be thought that every petty Error incurs Damnation if it is not of Faith; for thus the Holy Fathers of the Church in all Ages have fail'd, yet their failings not thought damnable, ſo long as in all things neceſſary to Salvation they held to the Foundation. But the queſtion is, Whether according to the ſence of the Apoſtle, ſuch Men muſt be ſaved by the fire of Purgatory? St. *Auſtin* tells us that, *Both good and bad, thoſe on the right hand as well as thoſe on the left, muſt be tried by this Fire the Apoſtle ſpeaks of.* And a little after, *This Fire,* ſays he, *is to be underſtood as ſuch, through which both muſt paſs, They that build Gold, as well as thoſe that build Wood.* And will any ſay that St. *Peter,* St. *Paul,* and the reſt of the Apoſtles paſs'd through Purgatory? Or will any of the Church of *Rome* aſſert this thing of their Seraphic St. *Francis,* St. *Dominic*, or their ever famous *Loyola*? 'Tis plain, the Apoſtle here ſpeaks Metaphorically; he makes a Fire wherein a man is in danger of Burning, a Similitude of the danger thoſe *Gnoſticks*

were

were in by building their vain and unprofitable Doctrines upon the Foundation which he had laid: So that upon the whole, I think the best way to explain a figurative Expression, is by a figurative Supposition. Let us therefore suppose a Foundation of Stone laid by some famous Builder: Two men take this Foundation whereon to Build em Houses to live in; one of the two Builds his House, we'll suppose of Gold and Silver, as the Apostle expresses it, but very plain and homely, after the rude *Gothic* way of Building, no way charming or delightful outwardly. The other makes use of no other Materials but Wood and Straw, but alarms the World with his curious Carving, and fine Devices, after the beautiful *Corinthian* Order, Stately and Magnificent, to Charm all that shall look on it, and so finishes a delicate Piece of Work. Now the common Vanity of the World is such, that Men are generally apt to part with all to please their Fancies; and so it is here, the Multitude admire his Building, and cry up the Workman almost to Adoration, and tho' his next Neighbour's House is built of Gold and Silver, yet 'tis a plain homely thing, rough and old fashion'd, not worth taking notice of or looking on. But here, the Ingenuity and Art of the Workman, the singular contrivance of every part, the joint and apt connection and suitableness of the whole, the just Decorum and Harmony every where visible, the regularity of the Columns so adorn'd with all sorts of delightful Carv'd works, Fruits and Flowers; and, in a word, the whole Fabrick is so noble, and in all respects outwardly perfect, that 'tis preferrable to all the Gold and Silver of the Universe. But now comes the day of Trial, when the Fire must try both these mens works, of what sort they are. The Foundation being Stone, the Fire passes on to the Building; And by reason of the first man's House being built with Gold and Silver, which the Fire cannot reduce into it self, That escapes untouch'd, only as there might possibly be a drossy substance on the outside, the Fire licks off that, and so, all

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the alteration it makes there, is, when that droſs is conſum'd the Houſe appears much more ſplendid and glorious, as the Metal is more refin'd, and purify'd by the Fire. But the condition of the other fine Building, is quite contrary; for, conſiſting chiefly of Wood and Straw, and ſuch combuſtible Matter, it preſently takes fire, and burns furiouſly, that the Poor man, who is ſuddenly ſurpriz'd with the Calamity, being perhaps two or three Stories high, and the Flames aſcending, and threatning Deſtruction round about him, knows of no way whereby to eſcape one danger, but by running into another: And delays in ſuch caſes being dangerous, he looks out at his Window, and, not conſidering the greatneſs of the fall, his fear of Burning being much greater, he at the hazard of his Life, endeavours to ſave it, by leaping down into the Street; whence, if he ſo eſcapes, he becomes a miſerable Spectator of the Ruin of that, which but Yeſterday was the Worlds wonder: and they that were before ſo taken with it, now ſee it reduc'd to Aſhes, while the other Houſe which before they thought ſo deſpicable, ſhines in their Imaginations as the Sun in the Firmament. This I take to be as lively a repreſentation of the ſence of the Text, as the words will bear: and then I leave to any reaſonable Perſon to judge if the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of any ſuch place as Purgatory. I dare ſay, St. *Chryſoſtom* had no ſuch thoughts; for repeating the ſame words, *But he ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by Fire*; "That is, ſays he, as a man "that, when at Midnight his Houſe is ſet on Fire, wakes "and leaps out of Bed, and runs Naked out of Doors, taking "nothing along with him, his only care being to free "his own Body from the Flames. But the Gentlemen we are to deal with in theſe days are mere Grammatiſts where they can find any thing in the Letter that ſeems to favour their purpoſe, though the ſence of the Text may be hid in a Figure. But he that can aſſert the Doctrine of Purgatory from ſuch a Text as this, may as well ſay that the Apoſtle was a Maſon or Carpenter, becauſe he calls himſelf *a Builder*;

der; or that he Preach'd to Houſes and Walls, becauſe he calls the *Corinthians* God's *Building*; or that our Saviour himſelf was a Stone, becauſe he is expreſly call'd *the head ſtone of the corner*. But whither wou'd ſuch abſurdities hurry us? I aſſure you, Madam, 'tis very unreaſonable to ſuppoſe the Doctrine from ſuch a Text as this; and I think they can find none plainer than one of theſe two. Which being made thus plain to the contrary, I ſhall only briefly hint a few Texts againſt the particular Doctrine of Purgatory, and ſo conclude this Point.

Eccl. 11. 3.—*If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themſelves upon the Earth: and if the tree fall toward the South, or toward the North: in the place where the tree falleth, there it ſhall lie.*—This Text is a Metaphorical intimation of the ſtate of the Soul after this life. As a Tree that is falling muſt fall one way, either *to the South or to the North*, &c.; So the Soul when it leaves the Body muſt go to ſome certain place: and as the Tree ſhall remain in the place where it fell, ſo the Soul muſt abide in the place whither ſhe firſt goes when ſhe leaves the Body. But the Preacher is more plain to the purpoſe, *Chap.* 12. 7. where he ſays, *The Duſt*, that is, Man's Body, *ſhall return to the Earth as it was; and the Spirit ſhall return to God who gave it*. And the Prophet ſays, *Iſai.* 57. 3. *The Righteous ſhall enter into Peace.*—Now according to the Practice of the Church of *Rome* in this particular, unleſs the ſpecial favour of the Biſhop of *Rome* intervene, all, both good and bad, muſt paſs through Purgatory, in order to their Perfection, tho' according to the Doctrine of the firſt Query, they may be more than perfect before they come thither. But what then becomes of the many Promiſes made to the Godly, both in the Old and New Teſtaments, if before they can enjoy the Rewards promis'd, they muſt undergo ſo ſevere a Puniſhment by the way?

Revel. 14. 13.—*And I heard a voice from Heaven, ſaying unto me, write, Bleſſed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from*

from henceforth—And, if there is any ſuch place as Purgatory, wherein the beſt of Men muſt endure Torment for a Time, how can the Blood of Chriſt be ſaid to *cleanſe any from all Sin*, 1 Joh. 1. 7? Certainly, God does not require that his Servants ſhou'd paſs through the Fire to purify 'em and make 'em fit for Heaven, after they are waſh'd in the Blood of his Son. We are taught by the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 9. 14, that the Blood of Chriſt purges our Conſciences from dead Works: but we quite deſtroy the belief of this, if we admit the leaſt thought of any other Purgation. Our Saviour tells us, *Joh.* 3. 18. that *He that believeth on him is not condemned.* And if God does not condemn, 'tis hard to think he'll puniſh: which he muſt do, if the beſt of Men muſt paſs through Purgatory before they can come to Heaven. But we can meet with no ſuch place in the Scriptures. We find but two ways mention'd, a *narrow* and a *broad*; a *ſtrait gate* and a *wide*, into one of which we muſt enter. And
2 Cor. 5. 10. the Apoſtle ſays expreſly, *All ſhall appear before the Judgment ſeat of Chriſt, there to receive according to what we have done in the Body*: and then certainly, if there is any ſuch place as Purgatory, God muſt be thought unjuſt in calling Men to account for their Sins when they are purg'd from 'em. But 'tis much ſafer to believe there is no ſuch place.

Virgil indeed tells us of ſome ſuch kind of place in the Sixth Book of his *Æneas*, in his Account of *Æneas*'s Progreſs into the infernal World to viſit his Father. "When he came "to the *Stygian* ſhore, he ſaw Old *Charon* about his wonted "Bus'neſs, plying the Oars to carry ſuch over as came thi-"ther for Paſſage. But he ſaw ſome miſerable Ghoſts on the "Banks and in dark Woods thereabouts, to whom the old "Ferry-man was very ſurly, and deny'd 'em Paſſage, tho' "without doubt they'd have paid him as well for his pains "as others did. *Æneas*, as we may ſuppoſe, was amaz'd at "this partiality, and ask'd his Guide, *What was the meaning* "*of* Charon's *rough behaviour to thoſe poor Souls*? To which

"ſhe

" he answers, *Those you see him take into his Boat are buried,* " *and by that means challenge his Service; But those he beats* " *away, are not. None must pass these Streams 'till the Ce-* " *remonies of their Funeral are perform'd; but they must abide* " *in these dismal Shades on this side the River an Hundred* " *years, unless they are buried sooner, and then, I suppose* " *buried or not buried, they obtain their Passage.* Then the " Poet sets down a Dialogue between *Æneas* and his old " Pilot *Palinurus*, who being unfortunately cast away, was " kill'd in *Italy*; and by the cruel Murtherers left unburied: " for which reason he must be confin'd to this Purgatory, " 'till those People, mov'd by Prodigious Omens, shou'd " Solemnize his Funeral. Now not to make a Parallel between this Fiction of the Poet, and the Purgatory of the Church of *Rome*, I shall only tell you, that, I have seen the place represented by them of that Church, not much unlike it. They have a River, in which many are plung'd up to the Neck, and labouring very hard to get out, at one side of the River is Hell's mouth open, to terrifie the poor Souls, and over their heads, Heaven for their Encouragement. Whether they intend this River for *Styx* or *Acheron*, is not to the purpose; 'tis enough to suppose the Doctrine of Purgatory very ancient; because in vogue with the ancient *Romans* before Christ's coming into the World: tho' of late years it has got a Name which it wanted before, and as it was formerly known by the *Stygian shore*, *Black shades*, &c. now Purgatory is the Proper name of the place, and is therefore deservedly written with a Capital P.

6. The Sixth Enquiry proposed was, *Whether the Mass is a Sacrifice for the Quick and Dead?*

This Doctrine is built upon the other of Purgatory, and 'tis to be believ'd from that place that Men are so willing to trade for Masses and Indulgences: which has added so much to the Revenue of the Church, that it can now very hardly be laid aside.

But I have often thought it ſtrange, that Men profeſſing Chriſtianity, ſhou'd be ſo far bewitch'd to Gain as to deny the Efficacy of Chriſt's Sufferings. For if Indulgences will make amends for Sin, and the Maſs atone for unrighteouſneſs, what becomes of the All-ſufficiency of Chriſt's Merits, the Satisfaction made by his Death? What need have Men to go ſo far about for Mercy and Forgiveneſs, when they may have it nearer home? Here's a Merchant has Indulgences to ſell at reaſonable Rates, by virtue of which a Man may gratifie the Luſts of his Fleſh here, and when he Dies, a ſmall Matter towards Building or Repairing ſome religious Conventicle, will purchaſe Maſſes enough to deliver him out of Purgatory; and then let any judge if ſuch a Man is not far wiſer than a ſneaking Heretick, who lives in ignorance of theſe Catholick Helps and Salvo's. But for all that, if we may be allow'd to believe the Scriptures, we have no ſuch by-ways to Heaven; the way that leads thither is *ſtrait* as well as *narrow*. So then, let others truſt to Indulgences, and ſo be cheated of their Souls and Money too, while we tread in the Path which is made plain before us; and tho' we may want a little Elbow-room, yet 'tis better travelling ſo in a clean and ſafe way, than, by rambling out of it for more liberty, to truſt to the Promiſe of a falſe Guide that we ſhall come into it again, and ſo follow him through Boggs and Rivers in danger of Drowning every ſtep of the way. 'Tis evident enough, that the Son of God is our only Sacrifice; for the Apoſtle ſays, 1 *Cor.* 1. 7, *Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us*: And the Scriptures ſufficiently teſtifie, that by one Oblation of himſelf once offer'd, he made ſufficient Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World. And then what need have we of farther Sacrifices? nay, what warrant can be brought from the Word of God, to juſtifie the Sacrifice of the Maſs, which is the only new one contended for? The Apoſtle, *Rom.* 12. 1, Exhorts us to *preſent our Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, as our reaſonable Service.* Which Text *Bellarmin*

larmin thinks ſufficient to the purpoſe, and thus he argues: "Θυσία is a Sacrifice properly ſo call'd, that is, an External "Oblation, made only to God, wherein, by a lawful Mini- "ſter, ſome ſenſible Subſtance is by Myſtical rites conſe- "crated, and ſo chang'd, or, in reference to what it was "before, deſtroy'd. But Chriſtians have no ſuch Sacrifice "to offer to God, but the Maſs. Neither are the *Romans* "here commanded to Kill themſelves; for that wou'd be "an heinous Sin. Therefore the Maſs muſt be the Sacrifice "here ſpoken of. And farther Θυσία, which is the word "here uſed by the Apoſtle, is that Sacrifice which is offer'd "by a lawful Miniſter. But no Sacrifice is among Chriſtians "offer'd by the Miniſter, but the Maſs. Therefore the Maſs "is Θυσία, or a proper Sacrifice. Now not to ſay the Maſs is no ſenſible Subſtance, which he makes the main condition of a Sacrifice, I ſhall at preſent thus examine the Argument.

1. The Apoſtle does not ſpeak here of the office of a Miniſter, but the Duty of the Miniſters and People both. All are to preſent their Bodies a living Sacrifice. *I beſeech you therefore, Brethren*, &c.

2. Therefore ſuppoſing the Maſs was a ſenſible Subſtance, yet the Apoſtle can't intend that, becauſe that is to be offer'd by the Miniſter only.

3. Granting all he wou'd have in reference to the Maſs's being a Sacrifice, yet the word Θυσία is as properly us'd by the Apoſtle in reference to the Sacrifice of a Man's Body, as of the Maſs: For 'tis confeſs'd that Θυσία is an Oblation made to God only, wherein ſome ſenſible Subſtance is by myſtical Rites conſecrated, and ſo chang'd, or, in reference to what it was before, deſtroy'd. Accordingly, the Apoſtle adviſes us to preſent our Bodies *a living Sacrifice unto God*; and in the next Verſe, *Be not conformed to this World*: where, by our renouncing the World, we conſecrate our Bodies to God's Service, and ſo, as the Apoſtle farther exhorts us, we are transform'd or chang'd by the renewing of

our Mind, and our Bodies in reference to what they were before, corrupted and polluted by Sin, are deſtroy'd.

4. So then the Apoſtle here makes uſe of a Metaphor to expreſs a reaſonable Duty; as a Sacrifice is laid on the Altar, kill'd and cut in pieces, ſo we muſt die to ſin, and mortifie our Members which are upon the Earth, cut off all Affections to this World, keep our Bodies under, and bring 'em into ſubjection to the Will of God, and ſo being transformed from what we were before, Servants and Sacrifices to Sin, we become holy Sacrifices and acceptable to God. Whence,

5. Let us enquire what are the proper Sacrifices of Chriſtians, becauſe he ſays, that they have no other but the Maſs. St. *Peter*, 1 Ep. c. 2. v. 5, ſays, we as *lively Stones, are built upon a ſpiritual houſe, an holy Prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt.* And what thoſe ſpiritual Sacrifices are, we may be inform'd by other places of Scripture. The Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 4. 5. adviſes us *to offer to God the Sacrifices of Righteouſneſs.* And, *Pſal.* 50. 23, *Whoſo offereth Praiſe, glorifieth God.* And, 51. 17, 19, *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit:* and, *the Lord will be pleas'd with Sacrifices of Righteouſneſs.* And, *Pſal.* 141. 2, *Let my Prayer be ſet before thee as Incenſe; and the lifting up of my hands, as the evening Sacrifice.* Theſe are great Expreſſions from one under the Law, when the Morning and Evening Sacrifices were ſo abſolutely neceſſary. But what have we from thoſe that were under the Goſpel? Our Bleſſed Saviour of right challenges the firſt place, who in his own Perſon, blames the Phariſees for not knowing the meaning of this, *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*, Matth. 12. 7. The Apoſtle is very plain, to the purpoſe, *Phil.* 4. 15, &c. *Now ye* Philippians *know alſo, that in the beginning of the Goſpel, when I departed from* Macedonia, *no Church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in* Theſſalonica *ye ſent once and again unto my neceſſity. Not becauſe I deſire a gift: but I deſire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound:*

abound: I am full, having receiv'd of Epaphroditus *the things which were ſent from you, an Odour of a ſweet ſmell, a Sacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing to God.* From all which, the Sacrifices of Chriſtians are Mercy, Alms-Deeds, Prayer, Praiſe, Contrition, and all Chriſtian Duties. And theſe are the Sacrifices which are to be offer'd up to God, by every living Chriſtian for himſelf. But I can find no ſuch Sacrifice as the Maſs, nor indeed any other than thoſe above-mention'd. For Chriſt Jeſus is the Sacrifice for all Chriſtians in general, and theſe are Sacrifices which every Chriſtian muſt offer to God for himſelf in particular. And thus I have briefly given my Opinion of the Maſs, which amounts to this in the general, that Chriſt being our Sacrifice and Propitiation, we have no reaſon to think of any other; and he having offer'd himſelf once to God for all, there can be no other Offerings needful, but ſuch as every Man muſt offer for himſelf, *the Sacrifice of Righteouſneſs.* And as the Maſs is not a Sacrifice for the Living, neither can it be ſuppos'd a Sacrifice for the Dead.

If Chriſt Jeſus has made ſatisfaction for the Sins of all that are call'd by his Name; and if that ſatisfaction is certainly appli'd to all who are true Chriſtians, and Die in the Faith of Chriſt Crucified, and if this is made the abſolutely neceſſary Condition of having a Title to that ſatisfaction, I can ſee no ground Wicked Men have to hope for pardon, if they forfeit that. The Scriptures are altogether ſilent as to any thing that can be done for us after Death. To which purpoſe I'll give you the trouble of the following Inſtances,

1. Holy *David*, when God ſtruck the Child he had by *Bathſheba*, pray'd for its recovery, and faſted and lay all Night upon the Earth: His ſorrow for the Child's Sickneſs was intolerable. But when the Child was Dead, he aroſe from the Earth, and waſhed, and Anointed himſelf, and changed his Apparel, and came into the Houſe of the Lord and Worſhipped: then he came to his own Houſe, and having

ving Bread set before him he did eat. Then said his Servants to him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the Child while it was alive, but when the Child was dead, thou didst arise and eat Bread. And he said, *While the Child was yet alive, I fasted and wept:* For I said, *who can tell whether God will be gracious unto me, that the Child may live*, 2 Sam. 12. 22. We read nothing here of any Sacrifice offer'd for the Child, which certainly wou'd have been recorded if such a thing had been done: but he did not so much as pray for him or weep after his Death. For,

2. No Man can by ANY means redeem his Brother, or give to God a ransom for him, *Psal.* 49. 7. I think this is plain enough against any thing that is pretended to be done for the benefit of the Dead; and if no Ransom can redeem a Man from the State he immediately passes into out of this World, what signifie the many Masses that are sent up daily for one or other in the Church of *Rome*? I think it wou'd not be impertinent to add that of our Saviour, *What shall it profit a Man if he shall gain the whole World and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* Mark 8. 36. Which shews the impossibility of Redemption from a State after this Life. And this is farther evident in *Luke* 16. in the Discourse between *Abraham* and *Dives*, where *Abraham* tells him, *Verse* 26. *That between them there is a great Gulf fixed:* So that they which wou'd pass from one to t'other cou'd not. And then I wou'd fain know how they can say that any can be fetch'd out of Purgatory, as Hell is more mildly call'd, to Heaven? But,

3. The Apostle tells the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thes.* 4. 13. *that he wou'd not have 'em to be ignorant, concerning them which are asleep, nor to sorrow, as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.* The Apostles and the Primitive Christians had their hopes in the Resurrection;

ſurrection; they had no thought of a ſtate of Puniſhment after Death, from which they were to be freed by the Sacrifice of the Maſs, but they built all upon the Merits of Chriſt's Blood, the full ſatisfaction which he had made, and on that ſcore made it their conſtant endeavour to become worthy partakers of it. The Scriptures make no mention of Offertories for the Dead, but in many places they argue clear the contrary: That there is no time or place of calling on God in the Grave, or for thoſe that are in their Graves: All ſhall at the Day of Judgment receive according to what they have done in the Body. There's no Expiation of Guilt after Death, but he that is not abſolv'd in this Life muſt be miſerable for ever. Therefore theſe performances on the behalf of the Dead, are no better than a breach of the Third Commandment, a taking God's Name in vain, by calling on him for thoſe, for whom he cannot be intreated. Upon the whole therefore, we may truly ſay with the Preacher, *Eccl.* 9. 4. *To him that is join'd to all the living, there is hope*: But to him that is dead there is no hope but what his way of living here will adminiſter to him.

I conclude this with the words of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 7, &c. *Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God: whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the end of their Converſation. Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and ſtrange Doctrines: For it is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace, not with Meats, which have not profited them which have been occupied therein. We have an Altar whereof they have no right to eat, which ſerve the Tabernacle. For the Bodies of thoſe Beaſts whoſe Blood is brought into the Sanctuary by the High-Prieſt for Sin, are burnt without the Camp. Wherefore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctifie the People with his own Blood, ſuffer'd without the Gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him, without the Camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing*

City,

City, but we ſeek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of Praiſe to God continually, that is, the fruit of our Lips, giving thanks to his Name. But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with ſuch Sacrifices God is well pleaſed.

7. Now I come to the Seventh and laſt Enquiry propos'd, *viz. Whether the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation can be maintain'd by Scripture?*

This has been endeavour'd by our Adverſaries, but to no purpoſe. And the Scriptures furniſh us with two very good Arguments to the contrary. Which are,

1. That Chriſt's Body can be in but one place at once.

2. That we eat the Body and drink the Blood of Chriſt only by Faith. Againſt both which, Tranſubſtantiation makes Chriſt's Body viſible in a Thouſand places at once; and aſſerts that we eat the very natural Fleſh of Chriſt, and gnaw it with our Teeth as we do our common Meat. And ſince in this Caſe we are denied the uſe of our Senſes, we muſt be judg'd by the Sence of the Scriptures.

And firſt, The Scriptures teſtifie, That Chriſt's Body can be in but one place at once.

Our Saviour, *Matth.* 26. 11. tells us, *We have the Poor always with us but him we have not always.* For, *John* 16. 28. *As he came forth from the Father into the World, ſo again he will leave the World and go to the Father.* Accordingly, *Mark* 16. 19. when he had ſpoken to his Diſciples, *he was received up into Heaven, and ſat on the right hand of God.* And there St. *Stephen* afterwards ſaw him, *Acts* 7. 56. In which place, as St. *Peter* teſtifies, *Acts* 3. 21. he muſt remain *till the times of the reſtitution of all things.* When, and not before, *he ſhall ſo come in like manner, as he was ſeen to go into Heaven,* Acts 1. 11. Now, I ſuppoſe you know the laſt ſhift they that believe this Doctrine are fain to fly to, is God's Omnipotency, and this they know we dare not contradict. But we know, that though God is able to do any thing, yet 'tis evident in many things he

does

does not apply his Will to his Ability: And on this account, though *John* Baptiſt told the *Jews*, *Matth.* 3. 9. *That God was able of the Stones of the Earth to raiſe up Children unto* Abraham, we muſt not preſently make the Fable of *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha* an Article of our Faith. For if this wou'd do the bus'neſs, how ſoon wou'd the World be fill'd with Abſurdities, and yet all paſs for Miracles? But if we conſult the Sacred Writings, we ſhall find that though God is ſufficiently declar'd to be Omnipotent, yet he never acted any thing contrary to himſelf, his Power never appear'd contrary to his Will. Now in the preſent caſe, if we believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and that his Will is declar'd in his Word, it ſufficiently appears, that Chriſt muſt be Corporally preſent in Heaven, 'till the end of the World; and then, to ſay that he is Corporally preſent on Earth too, and in ſo many Thouſand places at the ſame time, becauſe nothing is impoſſible with God, is to ſay in effect that God, to ſhew his Power, does ſome things which are repugnant to his Will; and to preſerve the Prerogative of his Omnipotence inviolate, will upon occaſion contradict his own Word. But the Apoſtles had no ſuch thoughts, ſome of 'em ſaw Chriſt aſcend Bodily into Heaven, and others, as St. *Stephen*, and St. *Paul*, afterwards ſaw him Bodily preſent there. Accordingly St. *Paul* tells the *Hebrews*, *Chap.* 8. *Verſe* 1. that he *is ſet on the Right Hand of the Throne of the Majeſty in the Heavens.* And *Chap.* 10. *Verſe* 12. *After he had offer'd one Sacrifice for Sins for ever, he ſat down on the Right Hand of God.* Where he pleas'd to obſerve two Errors confuted in one Text, The Sacrifice of the Maſs, in that Chriſt has *offer'd one Sacrifice for Sins for ever*; and the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, in that after he had offer'd the Sacrifice, *he ſat down on the Right Hand of God.* Therefore his Advice to the *Coloſſians*, *Chap.* 3. *Verſe* 1. is, *If they are riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the*

Right Hand of God. For, Phil. 3. 20. *our Converſation,* ſays he, *is in Heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Wherefore, *Madam,* I think the Counſel of our Lord himſelf is beſt to be follow'd, *Matth.* 24. 23. *If any Man ſhall ſay unto you, Lo, here is Chriſt, or there, believe it not.*

Secondly, Another Argument deducible from Scripture, againſt this Doctrine, I told you, was, *That we eat the Body, and drink the Blood of Chriſt, only by Faith.*

John 6. 47, &c. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, he that believeth on me hath Everlaſting Life. I am that Bread of Life. Your Fathers did eat Manna in the Wilderneſs, and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a Man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven. If any Man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live for ever: And the Bread that I will give, is my Fleſh, which I will give for the Life of the World.* Where we are to conſider, Firſt, That Faith in Chriſt is made the Condition of having Everlaſting Life, *Verſe* 47. Secondly, The Bread of Life, which, *Verſe* 51. is call'd his Fleſh, is only that Spiritual Nouriſhment of the Soul, which comes by that Faith in Chriſt: And therefore he ſays, that *if any Man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live for ever.* Whence I think it plainly appears, that eating Chriſt's Fleſh, and believing on him, are only terms uſed promiſcuouſly one for t'other, and ſo make nothing at all for Tranſubſtantiation. But the chief of the Argument is to come, *Verſe* 52, &c. —— *The* Jews *therefore ſtrove among themſelves, ſaying, How can this Man give us his Fleſh to eat? Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily verily I ſay unto you, Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you. Whoſo eateth my Fleſh, and Drinketh my Blood, hath Eternal Life, and I will raiſe him*

him up at the laſt Day. For my Fleſh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed. He that eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the Living Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father: ſo, he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me. This is that Bread which came down from Heaven; not as your Fathers did eat Manna, and are dead: He that eateth of this Bread ſhall live for ever.——Perhaps you may think, *Madam*, that theſe reiterated expreſſions are Indications plain enough that our Saviour here intends Tranſubſtantiation: But I aſſure you they mean nothing leſs. For, firſt, he ſays, *Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.* And on the contrary, *Whoſo eateth his Fleſh, and drinketh his Blood, hath Eternal Life, and he will raiſe him up at the laſt Day.* Now, if our Saviour ſpeaks all this of his natural Fleſh and Blood, with which he was cloathed, and which was nail'd to the Croſs and ſpilt on the Ground; and laſtly, which he carried with him into Heaven; and if, according to the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, his natural Fleſh and Blood are as really eaten and drunk in the Lord's Supper, Then, all Men, bad as well as good, nay any living Creature that is but capable of eating and drinking, may be in as fair a way to Heaven as the devouteſt Profeſſor of Chriſtianity. For if eating the Fleſh of Chriſt will carry one to Heaven, give a Dog a piece of the Tranſubſtantiated Bread, and why may not he by eating it go thither too? However, to ſeclude Beaſts, it wou'd be a bleſſed World certainly, if the worſt of Men were in as ſure a way to Salvation, as the beſt! which muſt be, if the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, and our Saviour's Words hold together. For he ſays, his *Fleſh is Meat indeed, and* his *Blood is Drink indeed*, And Tranſubſtantiation gives all Men the real Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt, and by eating and drinking them we get Salvation, which is here call'd Eternal Life. But

Secondly, *He that eateth Christ's Flesh, and drinketh his Blood, dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him.* Now can Christ dwell in a Wicked Man, or Unbeliever? *What fellowship hath Christ with Belial?* Thirdly, *This is that Bread which came down from Heaven: not as our Fathers did eat Manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever:* Whence observe, If one thing is to be understood according to the Letter, another is also. And then if the Letter intends Transubstantiation, according to the Letter likewise, they who eat the Flesh of Christ presently become Immortal. And thus the *Jews* understood our Saviour, when they cried out, *Lord, evermore give us of this Bread,* Verse 34. But 'tis appointed for all Men once to die. Therefore, eating the Flesh of Christ, and drinking his Blood, can mean nothing but our feeding on him by Faith unto Salvation. And, if by eating the Flesh of Christ, and drinking his Blood, we shall live for ever, and yet no Man can be saved unless he believes in him, either our Saviour must be thought to contradict himself, or else this overthrows the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and proves that we only eat and drink the Flesh and Blood of Christ by Faith. And I appeal to your self, *Madam,* to judge which of the two 'tis most reasonable to believe. But that what our Saviour says here, is not to be understood according to the Letter, will appear if we pursue it a little farther, *Verse* 60.—— *Many therefore of his Disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard Saying, who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself, that his Disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life. But there are some of you that believe not.* From all which, I cou'd tell you, *Madam,* and upon good ground too, that there is nothing in this Chapter, or very little at most,

moſt, touching the *Euchariſt*; but all that our Saviour ſays concerning his Fleſh and Blood, is to be underſtood of his exemplary Life, and wholſome Doctrine, which is Meat and Drink indeed. But ſuppoſing the whole diſcourſe to be upon that ſubject, yet there can be nothing of Tranſubſtantiation contain'd in it. Which will yet more fully appear by conſidering how often he urges the neceſſity of believing on him in order to Salvation: *Verſe* 29. *This*, ſays he, *is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.* So, *Verſe* 35. *He that believeth on me, ſhall never thirſt. But I ſaid unto you, that ye alſo have ſeen me, and believe not.* Again, *Verſe* 40. *And this is the will of him that ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have Everlaſting Life: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day.* So likewiſe, *Verſe* 47. *He that believeth on me, hath Everlaſting Life.* And this believing on him, in other places of the Chapter he calls, coming to him; as, *Verſe* 35, 37, 44, 45. And in other places again, it is call'd eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood. Whence 'tis evident, they are all Synonymous terms uſed to expreſs one and the ſame thing. But to proceed.

The Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 10. 1. tells us, that *all our Fathers were under the Cloud, and all paſſed through the Sea: and were all baptized unto* Moſes *in the Cloud, and in the Sea, and did all eat the ſame ſpiritual Meat, and did all drink the ſame ſpiritual Drink (for they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Chriſt).* Now the Paſchal Lamb, was as lively a repreſentation of Chriſt, the Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World, as our Bread and Wine are, of the breaking his Body and ſhedding his Blood upon the Croſs: yet 'twas never thought that they in the Paſſover did eat and drink Chriſt's real Fleſh and Blood; but only in that Feaſt they fed on him by Faith. And ſo when we come duly prepar'd to the Lord's Table,

Table, we are Partakers of his Body and Blood by Faith, by which also Christ dwelleth in our hearts, *Ephes.* 3. 17. Our Saviour, *Joh.* 15. 5. says, *I am the Vine, ye are the Branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.* Now, if all our Saviour's words must be taken according to the letter, which must we rather believe, that his Flesh is Bread, to be eaten by us as we do our ordinary Food, or that he is a great Tree, and we Christians are so many Branches growing from him; or that we are mere Sheep feeding on a Common, and he the Shepherd to look after us; or lastly, that he is a Door hung upon Hinges, thro' which we Sheep must enter into our Pasture? I wou'd fain know, if all these were to be taken literally, what we shou'd do to know which was true, and which not? Such Expressions as these must be taken Metaphorically; and so, As we usually enter into a House by the Door, so we go to Heaven by Christ: As a Shepherd takes care that none of his Sheep go astray, so Christ the good Shepherd of our Souls, will lose none of all them that are his: As a Vine gives Nourishment to its Branches, so is Christ a Vine to us, by whom we live and grow ripe for a joyful Harvest, or Vintage; And lastly, as Bread is eaten to sustain this Temporal Life; so Christ is that Spiritual Food on which we feed by Faith unto life Everlasting.

To what has been said on this Subject, we may add many Texts of Scripture, which assert the Elements which are the Matter of this Feast, to be the same after Consecration, as they were before. Thus the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, *The cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* So again, *Chap.* 11. *v.* 26, *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* But that which is chiefly in-

sisted

ſiſted on, is what our Lord himſelf ſaid at the Inſtitution of his Supper; *Matth.* 26. 26. *And as they were eating, Jeſus took Bread, and bleſſed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Diſciples, and ſaid, Take, eat, this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, ſaying, drink ye all of it. For this is my Blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for many for the Remiſſion of Sins.* If here is not plain Tranſubſtantiation, I know not where to find it. Our Saviour himſelf in the preſence of his Diſciples takes a piece of Bread, and plainly affirms that 'tis his Body; and ſhall not we believe him? yes, ſurely. But what follows? *Verſ.* 29, *But I ſay unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.* I think he tells us as plainly here, that the Wine was ſtill the Fruit of the Vine after Conſecration, as before he did; that it was his Blood. But to this we may add what St. *Luke* ſays of his inſtituting his Supper, *Luk.* 22. 19, *And he took Bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, ſaying, This is my Body which is given for you:* and ſo of the Cup, *This is the New Teſtament of my Blood, which is ſhed for you.* Where, if I were given to Criticiſm, I might take notice, as *Beza* has done, that Chriſt ſays, *This is my Body, which is given, for you*, not *to you.* But to let that paſs; we know that Chriſt was not yet Crucified, till after the inſtitution of this Feaſt: So that here's another figure, he makes uſe of the Preſent Tenſe inſtead of the Future, inſtead of, *this is my Body, which ſhall be given for you*, he ſays, *which is given for you*, as if it was a thing already done. Now in my opinion, it wou'd have been much more for Tranſubſtantiation, if he had us'd the Future Tenſe, and told 'em plainly, *This is my Body which ſhall be crucified for you*: and his acting the contrary, nulls all Pretences to the Doctrine from his words. But *Bellarmin* has wittily ſuggeſted another kind of Argument, which I ſhall the rather mention, becauſe it has

has lately been ſtarted afreſh, and that is, "If theſe words, "*Hoc eſt corpus meum*, do not intend Tranſubſtantiation, "they muſt want a Grammatical Conſtruction. For the "Pronoun *Hoc* cannot Adjectively agree with *Bread*, as "its antecedent Subſtantive: for *Bread* is of the Maſculine "Gender. Neither can *Hoc* be ſpoken Subſtantively, of a "thing that is ſeen and openly known, unleſs that thing be "of the Neuter Gender: But *Bread* is of the Maſculine, both "in the *Greek* and *Latin*. No man going to ſhew another "his Brother wou'd ſay, *Hoc eſt frater meus*: neither wou'd "any man ſay of the King's Image, *Hoc eſt* Cæſar. But all this is but a ſly Inſinuation, to cajole thoſe that know no more of Grammar than this Argument wou'd teach 'em. And I have ſo much Charity for that great Man, as to believe him too good a Grammarian to be gull'd by ſo poor an Artifice. I ſuppoſe he cou'd not be ignorant, if he knew any thing almoſt of the invalidity of ſuch a ſhift, he knew well enough, I dare ſay, that *Hoc* is here us'd as a Relative, and, as ſuch, that it might very well refer to either of the two Subſtantives, *Bread*, or *Body*; and in this caſe the ſeeing, or not ſeeing the Bread ſignified nothing: but as the Relative wou'd refer to both *Bread* and *Body*, it was in his Power to make it agree with which of the Subſtantives pleas'd him. And ſo, *Hic eſt Corpus meum*, wou'd have made as much for Tranſubſtantiation, as *Hoc*, &c. and wou'd have been as liable to Cavil and Diſpute: yet he that ſpake the words wou'd ſhew himſelf a good Grammarian either way. And ſo, tho' 'tis true, 'twou'd be improper to ſay of a man's Brother, *Hoc eſt frater meus*, yet it may well enough be ſaid of the King's Image, *Hoc eſt* Cæſar, becauſe, as *Hoc* relates to the Image and not to *Cæſar* immediately, the Image being a thing without life, for that reaſon the Relative is of the Neuter Gender. But to take a Simile nearer to the preſent queſtion: Suppoſe a little Girl, as like her Father as 'tis poſſible for her to be, ſhe being among

more

more of her Sisters, any Person shou'd single her out from the rest, and say of her, *This is the Father himself*; I wou'd know how we shou'd make this Sentence into *Latin* to avoid a Metamorphosis? I must confess, if it had been spoken thus, *This Girl*, &c. *Hæc Puella*, the Article of the Feminine Gender had been most proper: but as the word *Girl* is only included for understood, and *Father* expresst, the Article of the Masculine Gender is as proper, because, the Article may indifferently be referr'd to either the *Girl*, or the *Father*. And this suggests to me another Argument against taking these words of our Saviour literally. The Girl here, by reason of her being so like her Father, is said to be the very Father himself: Now wou'd not the By-standers be call'd Fools or worse, if they shou'd presently vindicate the Poet's Metamorphosis of *Iphis*, by believing the Girl is at that instant turn'd into a Man? and yet the Expression is no Hyperbole; but as the common way of speech is, to call the Picture or Representative of a Man, the Man himself: and thus our Saviour might say, *This is my Body*, and yet only intend the sign for the thing signified.

All this while, I think I have not made the least appeal to our Senses, tho' in a Matter so obvious to 'em, and yet can find no ground for the belief of Transubstantiation. But, as in things that are obvious to sence, our Senses cannot be deceiv'd; so neither did our Saviour ever deny us the Evidence of our Senses in such cases: but thus he expostulates; *Have ye not seen the Miracles which I did openly*? And in order to convince us of the reality of his Resurrection, he appeals constantly to our senses: *Reach hither thine hand, and thrust it into my side; a Spirit hath not flesh and bones,*

as ye see me have: He is not here, says the Angel, but is risen as he said: See the place where they laid him, There's none of him. And why might not he have had two Bodies then, one in the Grave, and another to shew to his Disciples, as well as to many Thousand now? No, then his Resurrection wou'd have been taken as a Trick, that some body like him had personated him: for 'twou'd be contrary to Sence, that the same Body shou'd be whole and entire in two places so far distant at the same time. 'Twou'd be a Miracle, but against reason; and that no Miracle ever was, but the Miracle of Transubstantiation. Some Articles of Faith, are above our Reason or Sence; but none contrary to both Reason and Sence.

And thus, Madam, I have endeavour'd to prove the great Disagreement between some of the Principal Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, and the Holy Scriptures. And this I presume I may say for my self, that wherein I have meddl'd in the clearing of an obscure Text, I have done nothing out of a design'd Endeavour to run down an Opinion, but as I thought in my Conscience it was Erroneous.

One thing only I desire at your hands, if you let any of the adverse Party have a sight of these Papers, that you wou'd desire 'em to be upon the square, and not quote Humane Testimonies against the Holy Scriptures: And if they can make good those Doctrines here censur'd, from the Word of God, notwithstanding what is here produc'd, I my self will become a Roman Catholick with the first appearance of Truth in those Doctrines I have hitherto thought False. But as I think that can never be done, so I humbly recommend this plain, but, I hope, faithful Piece to your serious Perusal, and hope it

may prove to your compleat Satisfaction, and that you may reap the full Benefit of a fincere Believer of the Gofpel in the end. Which, that God of his infinite Grace and Mercy, through his Son Chrift Jefus, will grant to you and yours, is, and ever fhall be the conftant and hearty Prayer of,

Madam,

Your moft humble Servant, &c.

FINIS.